

# Consumer Reports

"FACTS YOU NEED  
BEFORE YOU BUY"

VOL. 9, NO. 11

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NOVEMBER 1944



## *Christmas Issue*

BUYING A WATCH

FOUNTAIN PENS

CIGARETTE LIGHTERS

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

STAMP COLLECTIONS

BOOK CLUBS

RECORDS: CLASSICS  
& JAZZ

# The Postwar Market

... a summary of CU members' buying plans

*Last May, Consumers Union sent its members the Annual Questionnaire, which is designed to guide the CU board and staff in planning the organization's policies and activities. This year, the questionnaire included a series of questions intended to help the technical staff plan its tests of postwar products. The big job of tabulation of answers is still under way, but the results of some of the tabulations on household equipment are summarized in the following paragraphs.*

CU members are not planning to rush into the postwar market to buy whatever they can get, regardless of quality and price, their answers to the questionnaire indicate.

The equipment they now own is in various states of disrepair, as might be expected. In condition it ranges from a low for radios (45% reported good, 40% reported fair, 14% reported poor, 1% reported unusable) to a high for refrigerators (74% reported good, 21% reported fair, 3½% reported poor, ½% reported unusable). But most of them are planning to temper their postwar buying with CU advice.

## MAJOR EQUIPMENT

Automobiles head the list of major items CU members want to buy when they can get them; the majority of CU families want new cars. But almost half of these prospective buyers (35% of those answering) expect to hold out for postwar improve-

ments in materials and design; less than a quarter (19% of the replies) plan to buy during the first year; and less than a tenth of those who want cars (7% of the replies) will buy at the earliest possible moment.

There won't be any immediate rush for FM radio and television sets, either, though a sizable portion of members are planning to buy both of them. A quarter of those who answered the questionnaire will buy FM sets or FM conversion units only after postwar improvements are available; only 3% plan to buy right away. An equal percentage are waiting for improvements in television units; less than 1% want to buy them as soon as possible.

High on the "wanted" list, too, are washing machines (18% of members will wait for improvements, 6% plan to buy as soon as they can get them); vacuum cleaners (18% will wait for improvements, 4% will buy immediately); refrigerators (17% will wait for improvements, 5% will buy immediately); and radio-phonographs (18% will wait, 3% will buy immediately).

## HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

Most in demand among smaller household appliances are pressure cookers for home cooking, electric mixers, electric clocks, toasters and irons. In addition, substantial numbers of members want to buy cameras, electric fans, movie cameras and projectors, bicycles and pressure cookers for home canning.

**CONSUMERS UNION** is a non-profit organization chartered under the Membership Corporation Laws of New York State. Its purpose is to furnish unbiased, usable information to help families meet their buying problems, get their money's worth in their purchases, develop and maintain an understanding of the forces affecting their interests as consumers. Consumers Union has no connection with any commer-

**CONSUMER REPORTS** each month gives comparative ratings of a variety of products based on tests and expert examinations, together with general buying guidance, information on medical and health questions, and news of happenings affecting the consumer's interests. The Reports is the manual of informed and efficient consumers the country over.

**THE BUYING GUIDE** (published as the December issue of the Reports) each year brings together information from all the preceding issues with new material and special buying advice. Pocket-size, 384 pages, with ratings of several thousand products, the Buying Guide is an invaluable shopping companion. Every member gets a copy of the Guide with his membership.

**BREAD & BUTTER** reports each week on new and predicted price and quality changes in consumer goods, interprets Washington legislation as it affects consumers, reports government regulations and actions on the consumer front, advises on food buying and preparation.

**SUBSCRIPTION FEES** are \$4 a year, which includes subscription to the Reports and Buying Guide and Bread & Butter; \$3.50 without Bread & Butter (for foreign and Canadian memberships add 50¢). Reduced subscription rates are available for groups of 10 or more

cial interest and accepts no advertising; income is derived from the fees of members, each of whom has the right to vote for candidates to the Board of Directors. More than 70 educators, social workers and scientists sponsor Consumers Union and a national advisory committee of consumer leaders contributes to the formulation of policy (names of the members of the committee will be furnished on request).

(write for details). Library rates, for the Reports and Bread & Butter without the Buying Guide issue, are \$3.50; for the Reports alone, \$3.

Membership involves no obligation whatsoever on the part of the member beyond the payment of the subscription fee.

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## Things to Come

The next issue of *Consumer Reports* will be the Annual Buying Guide issue; and if the gods that watch over printing presses and binding machines (and Consumers Union) are good, the Guide will be in the mails and on the way to CU members sometime in December. Present prospects indicate that the long delay in the completion of last year's Buying Guide, when urgent government print orders pre-empted linotype machines, presses and binding machines, will not be repeated this year.

Since the November *Reports* is the last regular issue for 1944, we want to use this space to say a word about the coming year. While our armies are still meeting bitter resistance on European battlefields, unless practically every military expert is dead wrong the coming months will see the end of the war in Europe. And that will mean the renewal of production of automobiles, washing machines, radios, and other consumer durable goods.

When that time comes, Consumers Union will again—as before the war—headline its annual ratings of the new models of automobiles, refrigerators and radios, and its periodic reports on other mechanical and electrical equipment—washing machines, vacuum cleaners, toasters, irons, etc.

Now it's perfectly true—and everyone knows it—that over the course of a year, the average family can save more money by buying CU's "Best Buys" in foods, textiles, cosmetics, household supplies, and other relatively small items than it can on the infrequent purchase of a single large item, such as a car or a refrigerator. Nevertheless, when the war ended production of the big and expensive items and thus put a temporary stop to CU's reports on such products, many people—even some of our best friends—thought that the demise of Consumers Union was in sight. They were sure that most people joined CU just to get the ratings of the big and expensive products, and that not enough consumers were interested in the reports on the smaller items to keep the organization going through the autoless, radioless years.

And now that we're near the end of the last of the autoless, radioless period, we're happy to advise that the gloomy prophets were wrong. Consumers do want reports on canned vegetables and toothpaste and aspirin. They do want to know who puts out the most reliable vegetable seed or the most durable shoes. The evidence that they want this kind of information is to be found in the fact that thousands of consumers have been joining CU or renewing their memberships each month. Thanks to them and to the nearly 2000 "membership associates" whose contributions made it possible to avoid an increase in the subscription rates, CU will begin the new year not only with an increased membership, but also with greater resources.

In effect, because consumers have wanted to know about such little things as underwear and shirts, tomato juice and paper towels, CU will be able to step up its postwar testing program, and give them more information than ever before on the big and costly products. The CU staff, and special consultants in many fields, are keeping close watch on technical developments and production plans; and when production begins again, they will put their knowledge to good use in telling CU members what to buy and when to buy.



"Because it was established for the very purpose of aiding families to buy wisely, to avoid waste and to maintain health and living standards, and because it is the largest technical organization providing such guidance, Consumers Union recognizes a special responsibility to the nation. In full awareness of that responsibility, we pledge ourselves to do everything in our power to help Americans as consumers make the greatest possible contribution to the national need."—FROM A RESOLUTION ADOPTED ON DECEMBER 10, 1941, BY THE DIRECTORS.

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## REPORTS ON PRODUCTS

Ratings of products represent the best judgment of staff technicians or of consultants in university, governmental and private laboratories. Samples for test are in practically all cases obtained on the open market by CU's shoppers. Ratings are based on laboratory tests, carefully controlled use tests, the opinion of qualified authorities, the experience of a large number of persons, or on a combination of these factors. Even with rigorous tests, interpretation of findings is a matter on which expert opinion often differs. It is Consumers Union's pledge that opinions entering into its evaluations shall be as free from bias as it is possible to make them.

# Watches

Glittering cases and elaborate faces may conceal a mechanism that won't take the wear and tear of long use. Here CU surveys the watch market, and tells what to look for and what to avoid when you buy

If you need a watch or want to buy one as a Christmas gift, you'll be glad to know that good imported watches are available at not too high a price, even though such old American stand-by's as *Elgin*, *Hamilton*, *Illinois* and *Waltham* are not now available. The watches which come from Switzerland range in quality from truly superior instruments to mediocre tools, CU's survey of the watch market, including expert examination of a large number of watches shows. And price, as usual, is not a reliable guide to quality.

Even some of the imported watches with an impressive number of "jewels" were hardly worth buying. The jewels in a watch—tiny synthetic sapphires or rubies used as bearings—prevent wear at important points. The need for such hard bearings becomes obvious when you remember that a watch ticks at least four times a second—126,144,000 times a year—and that every tick is causing wear. Other watch parts move with less frequency than the ticking mechanism, but the number of motions they make still adds up to an impressive total, and jewels are essential at seventeen points in a fine watch movement. A good seventeen-jewel watch can be expected to last for a great many years. A minimum of fifteen jewels is needed if a watch is to keep

good time over a period of many years.

It is possible to make a watch which is likely to give good service for several years with fewer jewels, but these must be placed at the most vulnerable points. Every good watch must have two jewels, rather than metal pins, at the "escapement" (the mechanism controlling the motion of the gears). On some of the watches examined, jewels were apparently put in to make better sales instead of better watches. One "fifteen-jewel" watch selling for \$22.95—the *Naef*—might have made satisfactory jewelry if worn inside-out; as a watch it was not a great deal better than the pre-war *Ingersoll*, since its pin escapement would wear badly.

On the other hand, some relatively inexpensive seven-jewel watches were found with the jewels so placed that they covered the points of hardest wear—including the escapement.

While seventeen jewels is the minimum for a really good watch, it is at the same time the maximum needed for any watch. More jewels are simply talking-points that increase the price of the watch without adding to accuracy or durability.

### BRANDS

The number of brands of Swiss watches sold in this country runs to

many thousands, but there are actually relatively few manufacturers of watch movements in Switzerland. And two or three of the biggest manufacturers account for a substantial portion of the "better" watches sold in this country. In fact a great many competing watches, often selling at widely different prices and quite dissimilar as to case and face, are indistinguishable from one another mechanically.

There are, however, some Swiss watches which are unique. Among them is the *Patek-Phillipe*, with its own movement, and recognized everywhere as one of the finest watches obtainable. Unfortunately its price—\$300 to \$600 in a plain case—puts it beyond the reach of most people. *Omega*, *Vacheron & Constantin* and *Tavannes* are other Swiss watches having their own movements.

What about the great bulk of "better" watches? Most of them are sisters under the skin, expert examination of a large number of well-known brands reveals. There are two major differences between the *Judy O'Grady* and the *Colonel's Lady* in the seventeen-jewel watch field: brand name and case. The well-known brand names—*Longines*, *Gruen*, *Bulova*, *Benrus*, *Wittnauer*, *Croton*, *Empire*, *Harmon*—are on good, sturdy watches. They are not in the same class as *Patek-Phillipe* or *Vacheron & Constantin*, but they can generally be relied upon to keep good time over a period of years, with only occasional need for adjustment or repair.

This is not to say that watches sold under other brand names, and sometimes at much lower prices, are not just as good. These—the *Judy O'Grady's*—may actually have the same movements as the expensive brands. If you could be certain of this, the relatively inexpensive unknowns would be the watches to buy. But unfortunately, the consumer is seldom in a position to make the necessary evaluation of the works. If you want to play safe, therefore, your best bet is

### Federal Taxes

Watches selling for \$65 and up are taxed at the standard Federal luxury tax rate of 20% on the selling price. Watches sold for less than \$65 are taxed 10% by the Federal government.



a seventeen-jewel watch bearing a well-known brand name.

#### CHEAPER WATCHES

There has been nothing to take the place of the *Ingersoll* and its low-priced American brethren. But the market has been flooded in the past couple of year with watches selling for \$10 to \$20, and bearing names never seen before. For the most part, these have very cheap movements with pin or other non-jewel escapements. They may run satisfactorily for a while, but they are unreliable, and even if they keep good time at first, they are not likely to do so for very long. The main curse of the Swiss pin-escapement watches is that usually they cannot be repaired, chiefly because the repair parts are not readily available.

Not all of the lower-priced Swiss watches are in this class, however. Notable among the exceptions is Montgomery Ward's line of low-priced *Buren* watches.<sup>1</sup> The *Buren* watch examined by CU had seventeen jewels and sold for \$16.30. It was found to be a well-made watch, in about the same class as the better-known and higher-priced seventeen-jewel watches such as the *Bulova* and the *Gruen*.

Relatively good, too, were Macy's \$12.98 *LaForge* (Macy's Dep't Store, NYC), and the \$15 *Cort*. Although these watches had only seven jewels, they had the essential jewel escapements, and the remaining jewels were placed at the critical points. These are good buys if you cannot afford or cannot get a 17-jewel watch.

Not so good was the verdict on several other inexpensive watches, such as the *Mazboot* (\$8.50), the *Meda* (\$13.50), the *Naef* (\$22.95) and *Schulte's Orris* (\$17.50). All of them were well-finished as to case. But all of them—including the 15-jewel *Naef*—were made with pin escapements. Though they were somewhat better finished than the old \$1 *Ingersolls*, they could not be expected to give a great deal more in the way of service.

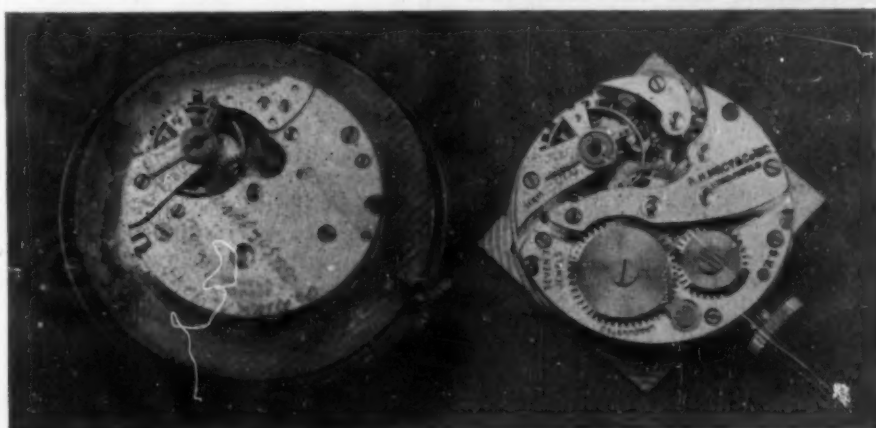
#### CASES

The addition of a better-looking case often adds as much as 100% to the price of a watch. In the standard brands, men's watches in stainless-steel "military" cases generally sell

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery Ward lists these watches only in its Chicago catalog. Not all models may be available at any given time. If you are interested in purchasing one, write to Montgomery Ward, Chicago, and ask for the catalog numbers and descriptions of their currently available lower-priced seventeen-jewel *Burens*.



The \$13.50 *Meda* (left) and the \$12.98 *La Forge* (right) both appear to be good-looking watches, as seen from the outside. The difference between them becomes apparent, however, when you open their cases (below).



The *Meda* (left) has a cheap movement with a pin escapement, and is held in the watch by the metal face. The *La Forge*, on the other hand, is well constructed, with jewels at the essential points including the escapement.

for \$50 and up. The same watch in a gold-plated case may cost a few dollars less. Put it in a solid gold case, and the price skyrockets, even though the actual gold content of the case may be worth no more than a few dollars.

In women's watches, trimmings shoot up the price even more steeply. The addition of a couple of practically worthless diamond chips to make the watch "dressy" often doubles the price. And the addition of more substantial diamonds may make the price practically anything, depending upon the stones, the design, and what the jeweler thinks he can get.

#### SPECIAL FEATURES

"WATERPROOF" watches are much in vogue among soldiers and civilians alike. Truly waterproof watches undoubtedly have a place. But few watches sold as waterproof will actually keep out all moisture over a period of time. It is certainly risky

to go swimming wearing the average "waterproof" watch.

The Federal Trade Commission is catching up with the watch advertisers on this score. It requires that no watch shall be branded, represented or advertised as waterproof unless it is impervious to water under all conditions of wear and use, without qualification or exception.

Expert examination indicates that most of the watches sold as "waterproof" should more properly be called "water-resistant." Their construction is such that while they are still relatively new they would probably not be damaged by an occasional brief wetting. But prolonged immersion—particularly after they have been in use for a while—might ruin the movement. If you get a watch labeled or advertised as waterproof, be sure to demand a written guarantee covering damage by water.

"SHOCKPROOF" is a term even more abused than "waterproof" in the sale of watches. According to FTC rul-

ing, no watch may be so designated unless it is immune to all shocks under all conditions of wear and use, without exception or qualification. Obviously, the shocks which any watch can withstand are limited; at best it can absorb only minor shocks and jars. Therefore the term "shock-proof" applied to any watch is a misrepresentation. "Shock resistant" is a more acceptable description.

**SELF-WINDING** watches have been on the market for many years, without too much success. Now they are being pushed again as a special convenience. Actually they may be just the opposite. Such a watch does become wound automatically if you do much walking and don't keep your hands in your pockets; but unless you do swing your arms a good deal, you'll have to swing your arms through a special daily dozen at watch-winding time, or resort to the standard winding device. Furthermore, jewelers report that self-winding watches are difficult to repair.

**CURVED WATCHES** usually have ordinary flat movements, with the back of the case slightly curved, to fit the curve of the wrist. Experts report that watches like the Gruen *Curves*, built so that the movement itself has a curved contour, are less satisfactory than the same watch built flat. Again, repairs are difficult.

**SWEEP SECOND HANDS**, much in demand, are a real convenience to nurses, doctors and others who have frequent occasion to count the seconds. But watches with sweep second hands often command a considerable premium, and you should consider whether the added convenience is worth the added cost to you.

**RADIUM DIALS**, like sweep second hands, are a convenience to some people, but only a trimming to others.

#### BEST BUYS IN WATCHES

**Montgomery Ward's Buren;** 17-jewel watches selling for less than \$20. (See footnote, p. 285.)

**P-X Watches;** 15- or 17-jewel watches, sold at army post exchanges for \$15 to \$20. These pass Army specifications for "military" watches as to water and shock resistance.

**Lowest Price Lines** of the well-known brands, such as *Bulova*, *Gruen*, *Wittnauer*, *Longines*, *Benrus*, etc.

#### DECEMBER ISSUE will be Buying Guide

This is the last regular issue of *Consumer Reports* you will receive until January, 1945. The December issue will be the 1945 *Annual Buying Guide* issue. The Buying Guide will, as in past years, run to 384 pages, but most of the material in the Guide will be either new or revised.

One section of the Guide, however, will be old—as Buying Guide material goes, very old. This will be the section containing CU's most recently published prewar ratings of automobiles, mechanical refrigerators, radios, electric toasters, vacuum cleaners and other mechanical and electrical products which have disappeared from the markets during the war.

There's a reason for this digging up of old ratings. With many products, the first models to appear on the market after the end of the war in Europe will almost certainly be the same, in essential details, as prewar models. With some products new models won't come out for months, perhaps a year or more, after the war. And the prewar ratings will help you decide what to buy before new models appear and have been tested.

Many watches with "radium" dials, moreover, have insufficient "radium" paint to make it possible to read the time in darkness. If visibility in the dark is an important factor to you, be sure to examine in darkness the watch you contemplate buying, to find out whether it meets your needs.

"CRYSTALS" are made either of glass or of unbreakable plastic or celluloid. In either case, they must be carefully fitted to the frame, to keep out the dust. Many unbreakable crystals tend to warp and permit dust to enter around the edges. Furthermore, they become discolored and scratched with age. A relatively recent innovation—crystals made of thick plate glass—combines the clarity and precise fit of ordinary glass with some degree of breakage resistance.

**POCKET WATCHES** for men are rapidly vanishing from general use, as the more convenient wrist watches take their place. But the pocket watches continue in use among men who value reliability and accuracy as primary considerations. The larger

works of pocket watches are likely to be more reliable than the smaller mechanism of a wrist watch. Furthermore, a pocket watch is not subjected to the multitude of shocks which a wrist watch invariably gets. And they are better protected from temperature changes and from water.

#### CARE OF YOUR WATCH

Watchmakers recommend a few simple rules to assure your watch a longer and a more reliable life:

*Keep your watch closed.* The insides are fascinating to look at, but a speck of dust or moisture from your breath may spoil the accuracy.

*Wind regularly.* Get into the habit of winding your watch regularly, either once or twice a day. Wind fully, until the stem comes to a definite stop, but do not force the stem beyond this, or you'll break the watch.

*Take your wrist watch off* when you wash your hands. Remember, even most "waterproof" watches become damaged by water after a while. If you do get water inside your watch, take it to a watch repairman immediately.

*Shocks are bad for watches*, therefore take yours off when you are doing violent exercise; even violent clapping is hard on a watch. And be careful not to drop it.

*If the crystal breaks, chips or warps*, have it replaced immediately, before dust and dirt have a chance to work their way into the movement.

*Have the watch cleaned* about once a year by a reliable jeweler.



"Guaranteed 5 Years," says the face of this Mazboot. But there's no telling who guarantees the watch, or against what. And examination shows it to be poorly constructed.



# Fountain Pens



Streamlining is the order of the day in "gift sets" featured by makers of the popular brands of fountain pens, but good, cheap pens are scarce, CU finds after surveying the market and examining many pens

Getting a good fountain pen these days is rapidly assuming the proportions of a \$64 question. For whereas the "big name" fountain pen manufacturers used to put out pens for \$2.50 to \$5, identical in all essential respects to their higher-priced pens, today they appear to be concentrating on high-priced pen-and-pencil sets, selling for \$13.75 to \$125.

*Eversharp, Parker, Waterman and Sheaffer*—the big four of the fountain pen industry—do still put out some individual pens, the cheapest generally priced at close to \$10. But, according to dealers, individual pen sales are not being encouraged; dealers report that the famous brands of pens are so scarce that they are more than willing to take pen-and-pencil sets. And consumers appear to be so eager for top brands that pens of these brands are sold as soon as they reach the retailers' display cases—whatever the price. Obviously it's a seller's market.

Cheaper pens are still available. But the days when usable fountain pens were to be found in 10¢-stores for 25¢ are past. Today fountain pens are not a 10¢-store item; pens of quality similar to that sold in the variety stores now cost \$1.25 or more.

All of which leaves the consumer who needs a new fountain pen, or who wants to give one as a gift, in something of a predicament. If you need a fountain pen for your own use, your wisest course will probably be first to make a search of desk drawers to see if you can't dig up an old pen that can be put back to work with some repair. If you're lucky enough to locate one, send it to the manufacturer for adjustment. The cost is usually low, and the chances are that the manufacturer can do a much more satisfactory job than most small repairmen, who may

not have the necessary repair parts.

But if you must buy a pen, your problem is much more difficult. If your pocketbook permits purchase of one of the "big four," you are quite certain to get a good pen, but you'll also have to resign yourself to paying heavily for what you get—in prewar terms. If you're looking for something in the less-than-\$5 category, quality is rather uncertain, and you may have to do a good deal of searching. Your best bet is probably the \$3 *Esterbrook* which, despite the disadvantages of a steel point and a small ink capacity, is well made and can be expected to give good service. As a writing instrument, the \$3 *Esterbrook* is essentially the same as the prewar \$1 *Esterbrook*. Both have interchangeable steel points.

## SPECIAL FEATURES

Some of the slogans of the pen manufacturers have interesting histories. The "high-in-a-plane" of *Eversharp* was originally intended to advertise the virtue of the pen for air travelers, in a day when air travel was growing in popularity. Then came the war, with consequent curtailment of civilian flying. *Eversharp* solved the problem of holding on to its air prestige while catering to a public which looked to be grounded for some time to come. Result: the slogan evolved into, "High in a plane, so at ground level, too. . . ."

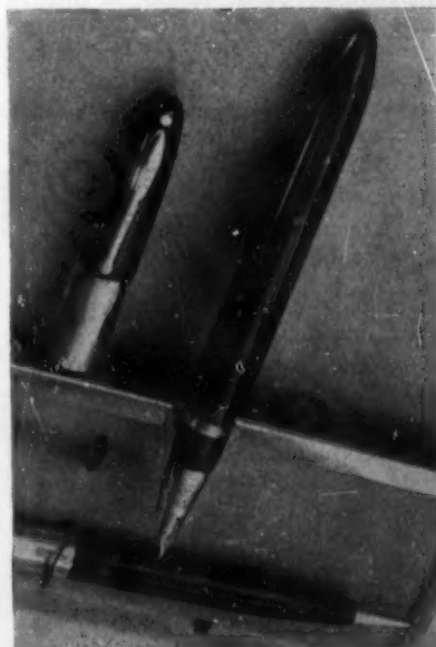
Streamlining entered the picture many years ago, when pen manufacturers sold consumers the idea of buying pens for beauty as well as for writing ability. But it was not until 1941, with the introduction of the *Parker 51*, that super-streamlining hit the fountain pen market. Streamlined from its plastic-covered tip to its slick metal top, the 51 had not so much as a screw thread to mar

its flowing lines. Despite its high price (\$12.50), and despite the fact that it needed special ink, the 51 achieved almost immediate success among the prestige trade.

Quick to follow, and similarly streamlined, was the *Eversharp 64* with its solid gold cap, sold in combination with a matching pencil for a modest \$64 (\$40 for the pen alone). And for what has come to be its lower-priced line. *Eversharp* produced the *Fifth Avenue*, similarly streamlined, but with its cap gold plated rather than solid gold. Price: \$12.50 for the pen; \$19 for a pen-and-pencil set. Except for the gold, the \$40 pen is essentially the same as the \$12.50 pen. The gold in the cap is worth about \$3 or \$4.

Not to be outdone, *Sheaffer* produced its *Triumph*, as thoroughly streamlined as the 51 or the 64, but with its big point, using "more gold," fully exposed. Designed to compete with *Eversharp's Fifth Avenue* market, the *Triumph* sells for \$12.50, with matching pencil at \$4 or \$5.

For those in search of super-prestige, there's still *Eversharp's* "Gift of a Lifetime," at \$125 for the set. Dealers report that it's something of a nuisance, with many admirers and few buyers. But the sales policies of *Eversharp* distributors, they report, are such that the number of lower-priced pens a dealer receives is dependent to a degree on the number of \$125 sets he buys.



*Sheaffer's "Triumph,"* selling for \$16.50 for the set, is one of the "cheaper" streamliners.

## GUARANTEES

One of the big features of fountain pen promotion is the long-term "guarantee." It had its origin in Parker's 25-year pledge. Sheaffer countered with its *Lifetime* line, and *Eversharp* capped this with its *Double-Check* line of pens and pencils, guaranteed "not for years, not for life, but forever." Parker came back with its *Blue Diamond* pens, "guaranteed by life contract." Even *Waterman*, old-time conservative in the fountain pen line, has joined the bandwagon, with a 100-year-guaranteed pen.

Actually, none of these is a true guarantee that the pens will not go out of order for the stipulated period. In effect, all are assurances that the manufacturer will service its pens and replace damaged parts, provided all damaged parts are sent back, and provided the claimant sends a nominal sum (35¢) to cover "postage, insurance and handling." Which, though it's not quite the same as free servicing, is certainly less than most repairmen will charge. And fountain pen parts are so cheap that the companies probably don't lose on the deal.

## COSTS

The cost of the material and the labor that go into a fountain pen is hard to estimate accurately under wartime conditions, but Kenneth Parker, president of the company that manufactures *Parker* pens, freely admits that, like the cost of research and development, it constitutes "only a small part of pen and ink costs." *Parker*, for example, spend 25% of sales for promotion. *Parker* dealers sell at 40% to 50% markup. And there's still enough left over to allow substantial profits.

## THE LOW-PRICE FIELD

CU technicians examined as many brand-name pens in the low-price field as could be found in the stores. None could be given unqualified recommendation. Except for the *Esterbrook*, they showed evidences of the same basic fault: they had been rushed through assembly lines on a mass-production basis, with inadequate inspection; and costs had evidently been cut on both material and labor to the point where it had become impossible to produce a satisfactory article.

The *Eberhard Faber Permapoint* (\$1.25), for example, might have been fairly satisfactory if the part of the point which fits into the section had been made long enough to

hold it steady, and if its cap had fitted better.

The \$1.25 *Stratford* was a sloppy, mass-production job, having the same faults as the *Permapoint*. In addition, its plunger-type filling mechanism showed a tendency to stick and get out of order.

*Wearever's* \$1.95 *Zenith* had a 14-karat gold point, as compared with the silver-alloy points of the *Permapoint* and the *Stratford*. Unfortunately, however, the barrel of the pen examined was so poorly fitted to the section that the entire writing portion wobbled badly when the pen was in use and it was generally poorly made.

*Conklin's* \$2.95 model appeared somewhat better constructed than the cheaper pens, but it, too, had a loose section and a poorly-set point, which was not held tightly enough in place.

On the whole, these pens are hardly worth buying.

Whichever price range you finally decide upon, you'll get more for your money if you follow the suggestions given below, in making your selection.

## INKLESS PENS

Several attempts have been made to produce a successful fountain pen which would be independent of a liquid ink supply. So far, none has

succeeded. The current attempt to crash the inkless field is being made with the *Ink-maker* (\$8.75), the ink supply for which is provided from dry "ink batteries." The idea is appealing. The "battery" provides the ink color; only water is needed to fill the pen. Unfortunately, *Ink-maker's* execution of the idea is far from satisfactory. With the sample which CU purchased for examination, it was necessary to use a pair of pliers to unscrew the inside parts of the pen for filling. And since the design is such that ink dries in the threads and clogs them, a pair of pliers would probably have to be part of the standard equipment needed for refilling. Besides, there's a good chance that you'll strip the flimsy plastic threads and have to choose between throwing the whole thing away and risking an occasional pocketful of ink.

Added to all this is the sad fact that the *Ink-maker's* ink is both poor and expensive. It takes a couple of hours after filling for enough ink to dissolve from a fresh ink stick to give satisfactory color. And for the first filling with a fresh ink stick, the ink gets so thick as to clog the pen. Each refill was found to be good for only two fillings with water which, at two batteries for 25¢, means 6¼¢ each time you fill your pen. Compared with ink at 10¢ a two-ounce bottle (⅓¢ a filling for a large capacity pen), the upkeep of the *Ink-maker* is an item to be considered.

## HOW TO SELECT A PEN

Whatever pen you buy, it is suggested that you follow this procedure in making your selection:

1. Ask the clerk to show you all the pens he has in the general price line you are planning to buy, and see which of these have the general size, color and writing point you prefer.

2. Unscrew the cap and, without taking it off, screw it back into place. Reject any pen on which the screw action does not come to a definite stop at the end of the thread.

3. Remove the cap and look to see whether there is an inner cap. Then place the cap in writing position. It should fit firmly and easily, with no tendency to fall off.

4. Hold the barrel of the pen with one hand and, with the other, see whether the point or the section is loose. There should be no motion of the point or the section.

5. Read the lettering on the pen point. The best points will be stamped



Examine the point to see what it's made of. A 14K gold point is preferable to an alloy such as the silver-palladium of the point above.



"14 K." Those labeled simply "solid gold" are likely to have smaller gold content; these are likely to be brittle and to have a tendency to crack. Pens made of steel or of other alloys are not as desirable as good gold points.

6. Turn the point around and inspect its tip closely. There should be a bit of iridium or other hard alloy soldered to the tip. A properly made point will last through a lifetime of wear; a point without a hard tip, even if it is made of gold, will soon wear and the pen will begin to scratch.

7. Try to insert the edge of a thin paper between the point and the feed. If they are fitted properly, you should not be able to slide the paper in.

8. Without dipping the pen into ink, try "writing" with it on a piece of paper. There should be no scratching.

9. Dip the pen and wipe off excess ink, then give it a writing test. See first that it fits the hand easily; a pen which is too large and heavy adds to the effort of writing; too small a pen cramps the hand. Some persons prefer fairly flexible points, others like them firm; some like fine points, others prefer stubby ones. If you are buying the pen for someone else, you'll have to use your judgment, of course. In that case, however, it's a good idea to get assurance that the pen may be exchanged if the recipient finds the point unsatisfactory.

10. If the clerk will permit it, fill the pen with ink or with water, and then empty it, counting the drops.

## The Price of Fountain Pens

Before the war, an average-size 14K gold point used to cost the pen manufacturer about 30¢ (extra-large 14K gold points, up to about \$1). Materials and labor for barrels and caps ran from a few cents to ten or fifteen cents; with decorative work, a little more. The feed added three or four cents, and the sac, a cent or two. The total material and labor cost for a pen selling in the \$2.50 to \$5 price range generally amounted to less than 50¢.

As a result of the war these costs have probably doubled—which means that the material and labor costs for a \$10 or a \$15 pen amount to about a dollar—some-what more if the gold points are larger than average or if a "radial feed" is used. Add from 50¢ to \$5 worth of gold, to make the pen look expensive, and the sky's the limit on retail price. Even with overhead and promotion costs, it's still a pretty good business.

The larger the capacity, the less often you'll have to refill, of course. Rubber-sac pens should hold at least 20 drops, preferably more. Some vacuum types, like the *Sheaffer Triumph*, hold as much as 40 drops.

11. If you make use of the clip on a fountain pen, check to see that the one on the pen you buy is well

anchored, and not likely to break off. Its edges should be smooth, and its grip firm enough to permit a strong hold on the pocket to which it is attached.

### CARE OF PENS

Look for instructions on how to fill and empty your pen or, if there are no printed instructions, ask the salesclerk to show you. Some pens require several pumping motions, others need only one; on some pens the whole point and part of the section have to be held in the ink to fill the pen properly, others can be filled from the point alone.

Try to stick to one kind of ink for your pen. If you do change from one brand to another or from one color to another, wash out your pen before you fill it with the new ink. Use cold water, and fill and empty the pen with it several times, until the rinsings are practically colorless. Then empty completely, wipe off the point, and fill with the new ink. This is important, as inks are often incompatible, and mixing inks may cause ingredients to precipitate in the pen, clogging it badly.

If you have a pen which is not likely to be used for some time, empty it and wash it out with clear water before you put it away. In this way you'll lengthen the life of the rubber sac.

Most pens—particularly those with large capacity—tend to flood or leak when the ink reaches a low level. To prevent this, it's a good idea to refill before the pen has quite run dry.

## CIGARETTE LIGHTERS

If it's smoking you're after, don't go off into a foxhole or any other isolated spot with a *Foxhole* or any other "cat-tail" lighter unless you also have a good, reliable package of matches with you, CU technicians advise. Otherwise you'll wear out your thumb or your flint—whichever is weaker—but unless your temper flares to spark intensity, you may not have your smoke. For the *Foxhole* lighter is a temperamental affair—sometimes it works, but mostly it doesn't.

The outlook isn't entirely gloomy, however. There are good lighters on

Good lighters are still to be found, but many of those on the market are likely to be more a nuisance than an asset, tests of fourteen available brands show

the market, to judge from CU's tests of 14 brands, priced from 35¢ to \$27.50. In fact, with the exception of the popular *Ronson*, which is completely off the market, cigarette lighters are less of a war casualty than many comparable products; good brands are still available in all price

ranges. And, taken as a whole, they're no better and no worse than the prewar assortment, comparison with five prewar lighters indicates.

**RELIABILITY**—the certainty that the lighter will light—was given the greatest weight in the ratings. To determine the degree of reliability, the flints and wicks of the lighters were first adjusted to maximum efficiency, then 25 attempts were made to strike a light. Credit was given for each successful try.

Advertisements give much emphasis to "windproof" features. It is true



Even though the \$1.50 selling price includes a spare wick and 18 flints, the "Foxhole Blackout" is a poor buy because it is unreliable.

that a windshield of some sort is an advantage, but it is actually of much less importance than overall reliability, since a very efficient windshield can be produced, when needed, by the simple expedient of cupping the hand over the light. Actually the only truly windproof lighters are those of the "cat-tail" type (the variety with the long, dangling wick), which are so unreliable as to be virtually useless; and the *Lektrolite*, which lights the cigarette without use of a flame when the cigarette is puffed while the tip is in contact with the end of a tube containing the heater arrangement.

To check windproofness of the lighters, additional attempts were made to produce a light at standard distances from a "wind tunnel"; maximum credit was allowed those lighters which performed at a one-inch distance from the wind source, in what amounted practically to storm wind intensity.

**VERSATILITY** may be of no great importance to you if you smoke only cigarettes, though lack of versatility would mean that you would be unable to light a friend's pipe or cigar. And of course if you do smoke pipes or cigars, a lighter that's for cigarettes only won't do you any good.

All the flame-type lighters were found satisfactory for lighting any type of smoke, but the flameless *Lektrolite* and the cat-tail lighters of the *Foxhole* type were found useless for pipes, and the *Lektrolite* could not be used for relighting cigars that had been smoked past the tip. The *Lektrolite*, furthermore, could be used on an oval cigarette only after the

end had been rounded. The pressure required for a light tends to damage the cigarette, and it is doubtful whether this lighter could be used conveniently by those who roll their own.

**FUEL CAPACITY** is important, since a lighter with low capacity requires such frequent refueling as to become more a nuisance than an asset. Lighters seem to have the universal habit of running out of fuel when you are nowhere near a supply; in effect, a lighter that has too low a fuel capacity is unreliable.

**WORKMANSHIP** is as important as ease of refueling and of servicing the flint and the wick. A well-made lighter, like any other good tool, works smoothly, has well-fitted parts, and won't get out of order easily. A "jerry-built" lighter may leak, jam and get out of order. Careful examination was therefore made of construction features.

It is well to check the ease with which a lighter can be refueled before you buy it. Usually refueling is done simply by opening a hand-screw and pouring in the fuel, but some lighters have to be fed with a medicine dropper. Most lighters will work on any standard lighter fuel, though *Lektrolite* requires a special fluid.

When you buy a lighter, have the salesclerk show you how to replace the flint and, if possible, get an instruction sheet—particularly if the lighter is to be a gift.

Some lighters have space for a spare flint, which is a good idea. If you get such a lighter, make sure that the space does contain a flint, and replace it with a new spare as soon as it has been used.

Ease of replacing wicks is of less importance, since it is very rarely required. For most lighters it constitutes a major operation.

**NUMBER OF OPERATIONS** required to complete the cycle of lighting a smoke was counted as one measure of convenience. To light up with an ordinary folding match packet requires six operations: opening the packet, tearing off the match, striking the light, extinguishing the flame, throwing away the match, and closing the packet. The average non-automatic lighter takes three moves: opening the cap, striking the spark, and closing the cap.

A fully automatic lighter, such as the prewar *Ronson* or the currently

This year give

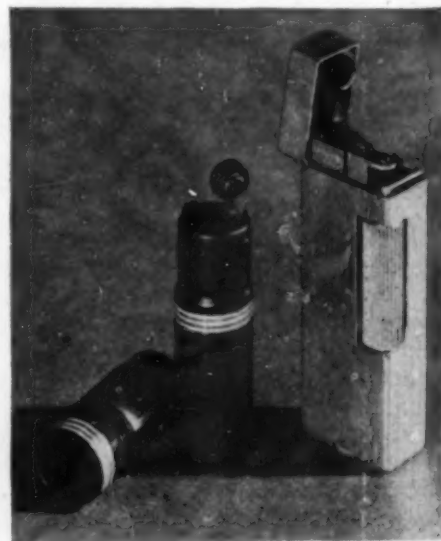
**CU**

for Christmas

(see back cover)

available *Metco*, takes only one positive motion: pressure on a lever simultaneously opens the top and strikes the flint; release of the lever closes the lid and extinguishes the flame. On a nearly automatic gadget such as the *Dunhill Service*, the top is opened and the flame struck in a single motion, but a second motion is needed to close the top and extinguish the flame.

**USE WITH ONE HAND** may or may not be important under normal smoking conditions, but it is convenient when one hand is taken up with bundles. In any case, a lighter that can be operated with one hand is certainly a convenience. Some models can be operated with one hand only if you have a very well-developed thumb. The lipstick-type lighter (such as the *Mighty Midget*) and others with detachable tops take two hands; one



Price extremes among lighters tested were the 35¢ *Mighty Midget* (left) and the \$27.50 *Dunhill*, both "Acceptable."



to remove and hold the top, the other to strike the light.

**APPEARANCE** of the lighter you get is pretty much a combination of personal preference and how much money you can spend. Gold-and-platinum lighters costing several hundred dollars may have their appeal, but they are no better as lighters than those with cases made of the baser metals. The important thing is to get a lighter that is good mechanically, and to let your taste and your pocketbook determine the outside finish.

**FIRE HAZARD** is present, of course, in any device fueled with gasoline or similar highly inflammable fluid. But, provided one takes normal precautions with the lighter fuel, most of the lighters on the market may be considered relatively safe in this respect.

There is always some hazard when the lighter is first filled. When the lighter is inverted for filling, there is a tendency for the fuel to flow down the wick and to flood the top of the lighter—a tendency aggravated by the common habit of overfilling. Lighters with windshields present additional fire hazard when they are overfilled, owing to the increased flooding area. The safest procedure is to add only enough fuel so that the cotton stuffing in the reservoir appears moist—not so much that the fluid can be shaken from the filler hole.

Two lighters that present real fire hazards are the *Match King* and the *Ball of Flint*. In the *Match King*, an asbestos-sheathed metal "match" is

struck against a flint strip. There is a tendency for the flame to envelop the entire "match" rather than just the tip. The *Ball of Flint* achieves its windproofness by means of an oversized, semi-circular wick, which presents a more-than-average fire hazard.

One other lighter, the *Thorens Automatic*, may be dangerous. It produces a flame through pressure on a spring release after the safety catch has been loosened. But the safety catch is nothing more than a very loose thumb screw, which may be released accidentally or never be closed at all. And with the safety catch off, joggling the lighter against other objects in the pocket might make it burst into flame.

**FINGER BURN** is another hazard with some lighters. Sterling silver, much used as a casing on the higher-priced lighters, is an excellent heat conductor. And the result is often an uncomfortably hot lighter, particularly if it is left burning long enough to light several cigarettes.

Another rather mild hazard presents itself on those lighters which have to be closed manually, with the cover extinguishing the flame. Unless the user pays close attention, the finger which closes the lid may be scorched before the flame is extinguished, particularly if the lighter is operated with one hand.

**BLACKENED FINGERS** are the inevitable result of operating lighters on which the finger turns the same wheel which sparks the flint. This is avoided on some lighters by the use of a knurled extension of the sparking wheel, or by the use of a spring device to spark the flint.

**MECHANICAL DEFECTS** were found on a great many of the lighters tested, in all price ranges. Some of these defects can be corrected with a pair of pliers and a little patience, but it's best to get a lighter that is in perfect working order to start with. Watch for screw threads that do not catch, particularly on the screw that holds the flint spring. Covers sometimes fit poorly, permitting fuel to evaporate. Frequently—particularly on the cheaper lighters—the striking wheel is poorly aligned and does not send the sparks directly toward the wick.

**SMELL** of lighter fluid is likely to be present on a lighter which does not close tightly, and from which there is constant evaporation of the fuel. This was observed on several of the



*The Match King presents a fire hazard, as the flame may envelop the "match" after it has been lighted*

lighters tested, including the *Metco*, which also had poor wick feed; that is, the flame lowered rapidly after it was first lit as a result of excessively slow fuel feed to the wick.

In the case of the cat-tail lighters, ignition of the wick (when it did ignite) resulted in a strong and unpleasant burnt-cloth smell. In fact, the odor permeated the lighted cigarette, and it was clearly perceptible for some time after the cigarette had been lighted.

#### **LIGHTER FLUIDS**

Tests of two popular lighter fluids (*Ronsonol* and *National*) and of *Energine* and ordinary white gasoline showed no difference in reliability of the lighters with the different fuels. The special lighter fluids were slightly perfumed, but this detracted little from the annoyance of the gasoline odor.

Differences in cost of the different fuels were great, however. As opposed to white gasoline, bought at 15¢ a gallon (with no State tax, since it was for non-automotive use), the lighter fluids cost \$8 a gallon (at 25¢ for 4 oz.) and *Energine* cost \$4.27 a gallon (10¢ for 3 oz.). This is not to suggest that you should drain gasoline from your car tank for use in your lighter. Ethyl gasoline is, in fact, not suitable for use in a lighter, first because it is poisonous, and second because it will "gum up" the works.

#### **ADJUSTING A LIGHTER**

Often a lighter which isn't functioning properly can be put back into good working order without too much trouble. Sometimes nothing more than a thorough cleaning is required. A pipe cleaner, dipped into lighter fluid, is convenient for this purpose. Carefully swab off all the exposed areas, including corners where grime has gathered.

If the lighter burns too low when it is adequately fueled, try pulling out



*The silver Dunhill Service lighter is convenient and reliable, but you may burn your thumb if you aren't careful in closing it.*

the wick about an eighth of an inch, and snipping off the carbonized portion. The more wick exposed, the bigger the flame. The easiest way to extend the wick of most lighters is to pull it out with tweezers or pliers; if you have no other tools handy, you can usually do the job by pinching the wick between a nail file and the thumb.

If the wheel or the flint is wet with fluid after cleaning, the lighter may not function until they are dried. The best way to dry them is first to wipe off excess fluid, then to allow the lighter to stand open until the residue has evaporated. The process can be hastened, after visible moisture has been wiped off, by lighting the wick with a match, and then holding the lighter so that the flame warms the wheel and the flint.

#### RATINGS

In the ratings which follow, the lighters tested are rated in estimated order of merit, on the basis of the factors discussed above. All those rated "Acceptable" are likely to function adequately, but note comments.

#### ACCEPTABLE

(In estimated order of quality)

**Dunhill** (Alfred Dunhill, NYC). \$27.50 in sterling silver case. Reliability excellent, but no windshield. Fuel capacity good. Three-cycle operation; can be used with one hand. Fine construction and appearance. Flint replacement easy, but be sure to find out how it is done before you try it. Contained spare flint, slightly larger than standard, but standard flint could be used. Clean thumb action, with a long, knurled extension recessed into the case. By far the best lighter of those tested, but much overpriced. Less expensive models of the same lighter have been sold in the past, but none were found in the stores at the time of test.

**Thorens Automatic** (manufacturer not stated; made in Switzerland). \$5. Reliability excellent; fair windshield. High fuel capacity. Actually not automatic, as four cycles are required for operation: release of safety catch; pressure on spring to open top and strike light; closing of top; closing of safety catch. Can be operated with one hand. Safety device not reliable, so may present fire hazard. Construction and appearance good. Space provided for spare flint, but no flints came with samples purchased for test. (See statement in text concerning fire hazard before purchasing.)

**Dunhill Service** (Alfred Dunhill). \$7.50 in sterling silver case. Entirely different from the \$27.50 *Dunhill*, above. Reliability and windshield good. Fuel capacity good. Semi-automatic,

with two-motion, one-hand operation. Two spare flints and one spare wick provided, but insertion of spares required tools, and the spare wick was useless, as it had no wire leader to permit threading through the wick aperture. Appearance and construction good. Dirtied thumb and might cause burn on closing, particularly if used to light more than one cigarette.

**Lektrolite** (Lektrolite Corp., NYC). \$1.48 including 1-oz. bottle of special fuel. Different in operation from other lighters, requiring no flint or wick. Heating unit in cylindrical case operated by pressing button at one end, holding cigarette to grill at other, and puffing cigarette. Can be used with one hand, but easier to operate with both. Reliable, but rather slow. Windproof. Cannot be used to light a pipe or a hand-rolled cigarette, or to relight a cigar. Construction satisfactory; lipstick-type, plastic case. Can be used only with special *Lektrolite* fluid.

**Thorens** (manufacturer not stated; made in Switzerland). \$7.50. Entirely different from *Thorens Automatic*, above. Reliability excellent, windshield fair. Highest fuel capacity of all lighters tested. Can be operated with one hand, but stiff operation of cover and poor arrangement of striking wheel encourage two-hand technique. Cover of sample tested was poorly fitted, permitting evaporation of fuel and consequent odor. Striking wheel extension offered some protection against finger grime. The \$5 *Thorens Automatic* a better lighter and a better buy except for fire hazard.

**Dunhill Service** (Alfred Dunhill). \$2. Similar to the \$7.50 *Dunhill Service*, but poorer workmanship, and made of enamel-coated brass. Flint screw thread was stripped on sample tested. Enamel on case tended to burn off, with consequent odor.

**Unbranded** (purchased at Walgreen's Drug Store, NYC). \$1. A flat, two-piece lighter, with case made of heavy

metal, enameled to simulate plastic. Reliability excellent, but no windshield. Fuel capacity fair. Adjustable flint; wick cannot be replaced, and lighter must be discarded after wick has burned down. Non-automatic; required use of both hands. Construction fair. Dirtied fingers. Required use of medicine dropper or spout can to fill.

**Mighty Midget** (manufacturer not stated). Price of apparently identical samples varied from 35¢ to 69¢. Two-piece lipstick type; brand name stamped on inside; identifiable from outside by "V" stamped in each end. Reliability excellent, but no windshield. Fuel capacity low. Adjustable flint; wick cannot be replaced. Non-automatic; required use of both hands. Construction rather flimsy, with mechanical defects on several samples tested. Dirtied fingers.

#### NOT ACCEPTABLE

The following lighters were rated "Not Acceptable" for the reasons stated:

**Ball of Flint** (manufacturer not stated). 98¢. Similar to *Mighty Midget*, except for use of a large, semi-circular wick. Reliability excellent. No windshield, but relatively windproof, owing to large wick. Fuel capacity small, and quickly consumed because of oversized wick. Adjustable flint. Wick cannot be replaced. Dirtied fingers. Fire hazard above average.

**Metco** (manufacturer not stated). \$2.49. Reliability poor. Fuel capacity low, with rapid evaporation resulting from imperfect slide-type closure. Fully automatic, similar in operation to the prewar *Rosson*. Poor mechanical construction and poor appearance. Fire hazard above average.

**Dunhill Windproof** (Alfred Dunhill). \$5, with one spare wick. Cat-tail type; a sterling silver version of the *Foxhole Blackout*, below. Reliability nil, but fully windproof once it is lighted. Strong odor when lighted. Cannot be used to light a pipe. Required use of both hands. Dirtied fingers.

**Foxhole Blackout** (Imco, NYC). \$1.50, with two spare wicks and 18 extra flints. Had all the defects of the *Dunhill Windproof*, above, plus poor appearance.

**Kem Ritze** (manufacturer not stated). 39¢. A streamlined version of the *Mighty Midget*, but very poorly constructed. Reliability poor. Very difficult to refill.

**Match King** (Galter Mfg. Co.). \$1. Operated by striking metal "match" with asbestos sheathing against flint strip on case. Reliability fair. No windshield, but relatively windproof. Poorly constructed, with fuel leakage and consequent odor as result of insecurely cemented plastic end. Fire hazard, because flame tends to envelop entire "match" rather than just the tip.





# Books for Children

Books that fit badly make even worse Christmas gifts than sweaters or gloves that don't fit. Clothing of the wrong size can be recognized the moment it is tried on, and in most cases it can be returned or exchanged. Ill-fitting books are, however, not so easy to spot. And when the child just can't get interested, you can't change the book for one that will suit him better. It is important, therefore, to choose a gift book with the state of the child's intellectual development and his interests clearly in mind.

This Christmas, with shortages in many of the customary gift lines, books are expected to be especially popular as gifts for children. It is, of course, impossible to give more than a general survey of the tremendous juvenile book field, but the suggestions which follow should help you to select for Janey or Johnny a book that closely approximates his size measurements.

At what age should a child get his first book? The time varies with different children, but the first book should come at the earliest age of picture recognition—generally about a year. Simplicity and durability are the essentials for this earliest literature. The pictures should be large, realistic and bright, and should represent familiar objects: a clock, a dog, a table, fruit, a cup, etc. There need be no text, or, if there is, it should be limited to a simple title for the picture. There should be no elaborate borders or trimmings to obscure the main object.

At this age, children give books rough treatment. Look for heavy, preferably water-resistant, pages; cloth pages are excellent. See that the binding is firm, with no sharp wires which may do damage.

From two to four, children are ready for stories—but watch your step. Many well-meaning aunts and uncles have not yet learned, apparently, a fact known to all nursery school teachers: that at this age children find their own world so full of excitement and adventure that they have no need for and no great interest in the "escape literature" of fairy stories. Nor are they yet ready for books that take them out of their

... make excellent gifts, provided you are careful to fit the book to the child. In this article, CU gives advice on how this can best be done.

own world; tales of Alaska or China have little meaning to them. They enjoy and need clear, simple, short stories of the wonderful world they live in—the doings of trains and automobiles, stories of how the milk and the mail are delivered, stories of other boys and girls living simple, ordinary lives much like their own. And, since children of two to four live in a world where the "feel" of things is exciting, special books with plush animals, cloth-covered people or fuzzy animals delight them. Such books are relatively high-priced, but they do give a great deal of satisfaction.

"Pop-up" books, in which flat cut-out cardboard people or animals stand up when the book is opened, lack durability. And once the "pops" are gone, little remains of the books.

Illustrations in the books for children from two to four should be large, preferably colorful, and without excessive detail. A tree should be unmistakably a tree; a dog should look like nothing but a dog. Resist the temptation to buy charming, fantastically-illustrated books which may please you, but will only confuse the child.

From five to seven, children are generally beginning to look at the text, even though they can't read more than an isolated word here and there. At these ages the stories can contribute to their reading knowledge, and large, clear type is a "must." Curious eyes will begin to study the funny, black marks, and good, clear printing will help them along.

Stories and illustrations may be a little more detailed than at the two-to-four level, but they should still deal with the world the child is living in. Wait a little longer for the fairy stories; the child doesn't need them yet.

From eight on, if you know the child well, you'll be able to make a pretty good estimate of his size in books. Special interests—budding hobbies—are likely to begin at about eight. You'll find simple, factual books on the child's favorite subject—birds, stars, airplanes, ships, flowers, dogs, or whatever. If they are simply written, clearly illustrated and not too detailed, they can be a source of real pleasure. But avoid comprehensive treatises that tell too much. Keep in mind the little girl who returned a book on penguins, with the comment, "It's a good book, but it told me more about penguins than I wanted to know."

From ten up, children will enjoy fairy stories, biographies, histories, travel, and hobby books and magazines. But don't get adult books; the child will lose interest if the books are too difficult. Try to find out the special interests of the child, and make your selections accordingly.

Fairy stories deserve a special note. Many modern children go through childhood without reading or hearing a single one of them; indeed some educators feel that it would be better if children did not read them at all. Others see no harm in the children's reading of fairy stories. Librarians in public libraries and progressive school libraries alike find that at ten or so, boys and girls begin to read with pleasure such fairy stories as those Andrew Lang collected in his *Blue, Purple, Red*, etc. *Fairy Story Books*. One librarian advances the reasonable theory that this is, in some measure, "escape reading," a getting away from personal difficulties, school problems or the increasing pressure of responsibilities, comparable to adult reading of detective stories. If the reading of fairy stories is balanced by the rest of the child's literary diet, it is not likely to do him harm.

If it is possible, you should ask children of ten and older what books they would like to have. Chances are that at these ages children will have in mind some special book they've been wanting for a long time. Be careful in your own selection, for by this time books have become a very important part of the child's world.

Bookgivers have a tendency to

recall nostalgically the classics they pored over in their own childhoods—Mark Twain, Dickens, Stevenson, Scott, James Fenimore Cooper, etc. Here memory plays most adults a little trick. Most grown-ups “remember” reading these books at least two years earlier than they really did. They think they enjoyed “Treasure Island” at ten, though actually they never saw it until twelve or thirteen; they recall “Tom Sawyer” in connection with their ten-or eleven-year-old reading, when really they read it at thirteen.

Don't be too surprised or disappointed if the child doesn't seem to enjoy the classics as you did. Tastes have changed, and children's books—like grown-ups—today tend toward the realistic; the language of the classics and the actions of the characters may seem stilted to the young realist. As one eleven-year-old said of the old children's books: “They use too many words.” Remember that tomorrow's classics will come from today's books, and if you are in doubt in making a choice between an old book and a new one, choose the modern book.

Just what children will enjoy in the way of poetry is hard to say. Most children prefer to have it read to them, rather than to read it themselves, until they reach the teens. Probably the very young are best served by simple rhymes about things in their everyday world. They'll enjoy the rhythm, and they'll prefer simple words they can remember. Young children will probably like most of the poems in Robert Louis Stevenson's “A Child's Garden of Verses,” and many in an anthology by Louis Untermeyer called “This Singing World.”

Poetry anthologies have real value for children from ten to thirteen, and they make excellent gifts. Two excellent and popular anthologies are “Come Hither,” by Walter de la Mare and “The Winged Horse,” by Joseph Auslander.

Dictionaries of their very own, written in terms the child can understand, are valuable in creating an interest in words and their meanings. Learning to use a dictionary at an early age as a routine part of reading can help form good reading habits that will last a lifetime. For children from elementary school through high school, there are several excellent dictionaries: the “Thorndike-Century

Junior” (\$1.48) and the “Thorndike-Century Senior” (\$2.75 or \$2.96), both written expressly for children; Webster's “Dictionary for Boys and Girls” (\$1.38) and “Student's Dictionary” (\$2.60 or \$2.84); the “New Winston Dictionary for Young People” (\$1.75); and the Funk & Wagnalls “Concise Standard Dictionary” (90¢) and “Standard Junior School Dictionary” (\$1.98). (For ratings and fuller descriptions of these and other dictionaries, see the *Reports*, January 1944).

If you're making a really big gift, an encyclopedia is worth thinking about. But before you buy, check with the parents, to make sure there's space for it; most children's sets run to a shelf or two. In a report on encyclopedias (see the *Reports*, November 1943), CU found “Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia,” at \$79.50 or \$89.50 for 15 volumes, excellent for children of junior high school age or younger. “The World Book Encyclopedia,” put out by the Quarrie Corp., at \$89 or \$99 for 19 volumes, was found good for older children—and interesting to grown-ups as well. The widely-publicized “Book of Knowledge,” sold in ten volumes for \$59.50 or in twenty for \$79.50 by the Grolier Society, is of limited value as a reference source, though it is an excellent browsing collection if the home is already equipped with a good general encyclopedia.

Look among the 25¢ Pocket Books for inexpensive gifts for teen-age

children. Paul de Kruif's “Microbe Hunters” and “Hunger Fighters”; Van Loon's “Story of Mankind”; M. Figen's “Pocket Quiz Book”; Albert H. Morehead's “Pocket Book of Games,” giving rules for 150 of the most popular games; H. G. Wells' “Pocket History of the World”; the “Pocket History of the United States”; M. E. Speare's “Pocket Book of Verse”; the “A. A. F. Official Guide to U. S. Army Air Forces,” and Felix Salten's “Bambi” are among Pocket Book titles.

A gift of a magazine subscription would delight most children. For the child of eight to twelve, “Story Parade,” a monthly magazine, offers a variety of verse, story and puzzles, as well as a contributor's page (\$2 a year, 70 Fifth Ave.). Boy Scouts would like “Boys' Life,” the official Boy Scout magazine (1727 K St., NW, Washington, D. C.). “The National Geographic Magazine” (National Geographic Society, 16th and M St., NW, Washington, D. C.; \$4 a year) has excellent maps and good, factual articles telling how the rest of the world lives. It's an interesting magazine from ten on—at first for its excellent illustrations, and later for its articles.

The Junior Literary Guild (see page 299) offers a book a month to children at various age levels. It's a good year-round gift if you can afford it. Even if you don't give a subscription to the Junior Guild, it will be worth your while to go over the list of selections made by the Guild's panel to help you in choosing new books.

Recent years have seen a steady growth in both quantity and quality of children's books. While it is impossible to give here a comprehensive list of worthwhile books, a selection which will suggest suitable gift books for all ages has been prepared. The list below is based on recommendations of progressive and nursery school librarians and librarians in the New York Public Library.

## POETRY AND SONG

**Peacock Pie**, by Walter De La Mare (Henry Holt). \$2.50. For ages six through ten.

**The Nursery Rhyme Book**, edited by Andrew Lang (Warne). \$2.50. For ages two (for rhythms) through four.

**A Round of Carols**, music arranged by T. Tertius Noble (Oxford). \$2. For





ages four through seven.

**The Songs We Sing**, by Hendrick Willem Van Loon (Simon & Schuster). \$1.25. For ages four through eight.

**The American Song Bag**, edited by Carl Sandburg (Harcourt, Brace). \$2.69. Americana; music and text, with historical data which makes clear the origin and significance of folk songs still sung. For ages ten through teens.

**Humor in American Song**, edited by Arthur Loesser (Howell, Soskin). \$3.75. Music and text, rather on the adult side. For interested teens.

**Come In and Other Poems**, by Robert Frost (Holt). \$2.50. For ages ten through teens.

**Bells and Grass**, by Walter De La Mare (Viking). \$2.50. For ages eight through twelve.

**Poems for Youth**, by Emily Dickinson (Little, Brown). \$2. For ages eight through teens.

**Come Hither**, edited by Walter De La Mare (Knopf). \$3.75. For ages ten through early teens.

**Salt Water Poems and Ballads**, by John Masefield (Macmillan). \$1.98. Especially liked by boys from ten through teens.

**The Singing World**, edited by Louis Untermeyer (Harcourt, Brace). \$3. For ages six through sixteen.

**The Winged Horse Anthology**, edited by Joseph Auslander (Doubleday, Doran). \$3.50 and \$7. Also school edition (Odyssey Press), \$1.50. For ages twelve through teens.

**Mother Goose**, illus. by Tasha Tudor (Oxford). \$2. For ages two through four.

## STORIES

**Johnny Crow's New Garden**, by Leslie Brooke (Warne). \$1.50. An old favorite for nursery school ages. Companion to **Johnny Crow's Garden** and **Johnny Crow's Party**, by the same author.

**Little Toot**, by Hardie Gramatky (Putnam). \$1.75. Tugboat view of the New York waterfront, for ages four through six.

**Another Here and Now Story Book**, by Lucy Sprague Mitchell (Dutton). \$2. Today's living, told in simple language. For ages five through eight.

**The Wonderful Locomotive**, by Cornelia Meigs (Macmillan). \$2. For ages five through eight.

**Millions of Cats**, by Wanda Gag (Coward McCann). \$1.50. For ages four through seven.

**The Dr. Doolittle Series**, by Hugh Lofting (Stokes). \$2 or \$2.50 each volume. For ages eight through ten.

**The Jungle Book**, by Rudyard Kipling (Doubleday). School edition, \$1; illustrated edition, \$2.50. For ages eight through twelve.

**Rootabaga Stories**, by Carl Sandburg (Harcourt). \$2.50. Nonsense for ages six through ten. Good for reading aloud.

**Mary Poppins and Mary Poppins Comes Back**, by P. L. Travers (Reynal). Each, \$1.75; both in one volume, \$1.98. For ages seven through ten.

**Hitty, Her First Hundred Years**, by Rachel Field (Macmillan). \$1. A hundred years of American history, seen through the eyes of a wooden doll. For ages ten through twelve.

**The Moffats**, by Eleanor Estes (Harcourt). \$2. Family life, for ages eight through twelve.

**Who Rides in the Dark?** by Stephen W. Meader (Harcourt). Story of stage coach days, for ages nine through twelve. Boys in this age group will also enjoy other Meader books, including **Black Buccaneer**, **Down the Big River**, **Boy with a Pack**, **Clear for Action**, **Shadow of the Pines**, **Blue Berry Mountain**.

**The Yearling**, by Marjorie K. Rawlings (Scribner). \$2.50. For ages twelve through teens.

**My Friend Flicka**, by Mary O'Hara (Lippincott). \$2.50. For ages twelve and up.

**Thunderhead**, by Mary O'Hara (Lippincott). \$2.75. For ages twelve and up.

## GENERAL

*These books cover a wide range of interests in non-fiction fields:*

**Wild Animals I Have Known**, by Ernest Thompson Seton (Scribner). \$2. For children having a special interest in animals. For ages eight and up.

**The Book of Discovery**, by M. B. Sygne (Putnam). \$5. Book on exploring, with very good maps. For ages seven through ten.

**George Washington's World; Abraham Lincoln's World**, by Genevieve Foster (Scribner). \$3 each. Unique in giving a view of the entire world at the time of the American Revolution and the Civil War. For ages ten through early teens.

**The Story of Mankind**, by Hendrick Willem Van Loon (Liveright). \$1.98. Easily read by ages twelve through early teens.

## A Book List

A selected list of over 200 recommended books for children, published during the last year, has been issued by the Child Study Association, and is available for 20¢ a copy. You can get the list by writing to the Child Study Association of America, 221 West 57 Street, New York City.

**The Lost World**, by Anne Perry White (Random House). \$2.50. Archaeology, for ages twelve through early teens.

**The Earth For Sam (\$2.75), The Stars for Sam (\$3), The Sea for Sam (\$2.75)**, by W. Maxwell Reed (Harcourt, Brace). Fascinating fact books, good for reading aloud. For ages eleven through early teens.

**The Story of Steam**, by Anne Coolidge and A. DiBona (Winston). 64¢. A simple history of steam, for ages eight through eleven.

**Fun With Science**, by Mac and I. Freeman (Random House). \$1.25. Simple scientific experiments which can be done with simple equipment. For ages ten through twelve.

**Marionettes**, by Edith Ackley (Stokes). \$2.50. Practical, easy "how-to-do," for ages eleven through early teens.

**Tricks Any Boy Can Do**, by Joseph Leeming (Appleton-Century). \$2. Simple materials and effective results in magic. For ages ten through early teens.

**What Time Is It?** by M. Ilin (Lippincott). \$1.60. A fascinating history of timekeeping devices. For ages ten through early teens.

**Now Daddy's in the Army**, by D. Carr and I. J. Parrott (Morrow). \$1. Army routines and basic training explained in terms of a small child's experience. For ages five through seven.

**A Ring and a Riddle**, by M. Ilin and E. Segal (Lippincott). \$2. A fairy tale interpreted, at the end, in terms of modern scientific invention. For ages eight through ten.

**The Land We Live On**, by C. L. Fenton and M. A. Fenton (Doubleday). \$2.50. Introduction to geology and physical geography, beautifully illustrated. For ages eight through twelve.

**Money-Go-Round**, by John J. Floherty (Lippincott). \$2. Account of systems of exchange, from barter to today. For ages ten through teens.

**Now We Fly**, by F. E. Sorenson and G. E. Rotter (Winston). \$1.50. Competent technical discussion of airplanes from the standpoint of one learning to fly. For ages nine through twelve.

**Modern Radio**, by Kingdon S. Tyler (Harcourt). \$3. About broadcasting and receiving, principles and functioning. For ages twelve through teens.

**A Boy and a Motor**, by Raymond F. Yates (Harper). \$2. Valuable information, including how to utilize readily available materials for construction. For ages eleven through teens.

**What and What-Not**, by Kay Peterson Parker (Houghton). \$2. Short history of art and architecture from prehistoric times to present. For ages ten through fourteen.

# Stamp Collecting

... can start at eight, and may last through a lifetime. Here are some notes, to help the gift buyer, on what the budding philatelist will need to start, and things that can be added as he goes along

Stamp collecting holds the top position among popular hobbies, with an estimated five million devotees in the United States alone. Add to that number several millions more who casually save an interesting stamp now and then, and you find a really substantial percentage of philatelists and potential philatelists among the general population.

Stamp collecting is a hobby for all ages, but it usually starts at the age of eight to twelve, when "saving stamps" and "swapping stamps" are popular pastimes among the younger set. From that point, it can develop into almost anything, from a disordered array of miscellaneous pieces in a soon-to-be-forgotten envelope to a full-blown hobby, lasting a lifetime.

Few people realize the magnitude of the industry that has grown around stamp collecting. Every American city of any size has at least one adult stamp club. Two national societies have memberships running into thousands each. There are several stamp magazines and weekly papers published in the United States, one of them with a circulation of 35,000.

Half a dozen wholesale firms serve as sources of supply. Hundreds of retail dealers throughout the country gross an annual \$15,000,000 on their stamp business. The Philatelic Agency, a branch of the U. S. Post Office Department, which supplies selected specimens of recent and current issues of stamps and sells them to collectors at their face value, sold \$2,028,467 worth last year. The Pan American Union in Washington does a flourishing business in selling the stamps of member nations at face value. Many countries, San Marino, Paraguay and Italy among them, have counted on the sale of a steady stream of picture stamps as a regular source of income.

What lies behind the wide appeal of stamp collecting? There are many things. Collecting appeals strongly to man's acquisitive instinct. And with stamps there are plenty of things to collect—nearly 100,000 different varieties have been issued since 1840. Yet this enormous variety need not be a stumbling block. Although a complete collection of all known stamps is hopeless, it is quite possible, by limiting a collection to one geographical area or one country, to make a fairly complete collection within a couple of years.

In collecting stamps, as much fun lies in the chase as in the acquisition. The business of poring over catalogs and corresponding with another collector who "knows somebody" who has the elusive specimen is an inherent part of the game. And the schoolboy who saves his pennies to buy Liberian animal stamps for his collection can get the same satisfaction as the wealthy collector coralling an ugly but scarce penny Post Office Mauritius for \$20,000.

A stamp collection can be made a miniature art gallery of beautiful engraving, lithography and color printing. Mounting the specimens can become a unique outlet for artistic self-expression.

Tracing the "story behind the stamp" is frequently as interesting as finding the stamp itself; many romantic and exciting tales lie behind a stamp issue. And added knowledge of history and geography, painlessly gained, is an invaluable by-product of the hobby of collecting stamps.

Each Christmas, thousands of parents play philatelic Santa Claus to their children. To be successful in this role, it is important that they make a good selection from the mass of material on the market, for suc-

cess or failure in capturing a juvenile's interest depends upon providing him with materials suited to his absorptive powers and capacity.

A common mistake is to lay too much before him at the outset. For an eight- to ten-year-old—a good age to start—equipment must be kept very simple at first. An excellent elementary stamp book is Scott's *Modern Album*, which has space for 11,000 stamps, with about 5,000 illustrations to help place them. The price for the bound album is \$1.50. The same album in loose-leaf form, selling for \$2, is even more convenient. Both are available at almost any stamp or book shop.

An assortment of stamps should be provided to go with the book. Avoid so-called "mixtures"; commonly they consist of trash and culls; at best, they contain a profusion of duplicates. A much better buy is an all-different world packet. A 1000-stamp assortment is a good beginning; a larger batch is likely to overwhelm the novice.

The best buy in this line is the 1000-variety *Honor-Bilt* packet (distributed by H. E. Harris & Co., 108 Massachusetts Ave., Boston), selling for \$2. It is stocked by practically all stamp dealers. Avoid unbranded stamp packets. Many are of European origin; they are likely to contain a large percentage of damaged copies, foreign revenues and telegraph stamps; all of which are worthless to the ordinary stamp collector. Chain store assortments are generally inferior in content, and are likely to be overpriced. Do not buy any packet which is not labeled with the name of the assembling house.

A good supplement to the 1000-variety set are Scott's gayly-colored flag and coats-of-arms stickers and ruler portraits, for which spaces are provided in the *Modern Album*. The three sets retail for \$1.

Hinges for mounting are a necessary accompaniment to the album and stamps. It is important that they be "peelable"; that is, that they should be able to be detached without injuring the gum of unused stamps or thinning the backs of used ones. It is important, too, that they be tough, non-curling and tasteless. The highest quality hinges are cheap, and it is false economy to buy any but the best. *Luxor* hinges, at 20¢ a thousand, and *Ideal*, *Blue Ribbon*, *Peer-*



less and *Fold-O-Hinges* (already folded) at 15¢ a thousand, are all satisfactory. Trade-marked hinges selling for 10¢ a thousand (which are second quality) or unbranded hinges which may sell for even less are not worth buying.

Tongs, which make it possible to handle the stamps without soiling them, and a magnifying glass, to show the details of the engraving, complete the gift packet. Spade-end tongs—costing about 25¢—are better than the pointed ones which may injure the stamps. A 50¢-75¢ pocket glass is far more practical than a large glass at ten times the price.

A word of advice: Once you've given the stamp set to Junior, let it be "his baby." (If you find yourself irresistibly drawn, get a set for yourself and start a little competition!) Let the child work out his own problems and do his own sorting and pasting. He'll miss most of the fun and a good deal of the educational value if you do much more than give him a few hints and references. He'll need his school geography book to locate such strange lands as Dahomey and Tanna Tuva, and he's likely to learn things about geography on his first packet of stamps that school drilling has not been able to teach him. And don't try to rush him; if he's really interested, he can profitably spend several weeks on his first packet.

Next in order, when the 1000-stamp assortment has been mounted (and only then) are the "Continent" and "Empire" packets. Again, the Harris line is incontestably the best. A 500-variety *Honor-Bilt* South and Central America packet costs \$3; 500 British Colonials from the same firm cost \$4; other comparable assortments are in the same price range.

After this, "Country" packets will help fill in the album's weak pages. These packets are smaller and generally less expensive; for example, a set of 50 different Argentine stamps sells for 25¢. A full list of these assortments is to be found in *The Stamp Collector's Annual Catalog* (10¢, postpaid, from the Harris Co., together with *The Stamp Finder* for identifying strange specimens; other literature, and a free set of stamps.)

Along about this point, a collection of duplicates will have begun to accumulate. They are the stock-in-trade for "stamp swapping," one of the most delightful side-lines of the

stamp collecting hobby. Stamp-for-stamp is the common rule among juvenile stamp collectors, though sometimes they are able to drive a harder bargain.

After having collected and mounted say 2500 varieties, the budding philatelist will have become adept at identifying and classifying face-different stamps. Now he should be provided with a few new tools: a stamp catalog, a watermark detector and a perforation gauge.

A catalog is simply a listing of all the stamps that have ever been issued, with illustrations of the different types of designs and notations covering subjects, dates of issue, colors, watermarks, perforations and current valuations, used and unused. By far the best for the American collector is Scott's *Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue*, "the encyclopedia of philately," published annually for \$5. Most stamp and book stores stock it. There is no particular need to get the latest edition; a relatively recent edition, listing all except the latest issues, can often be bought in second-hand book stores for \$1 or so.

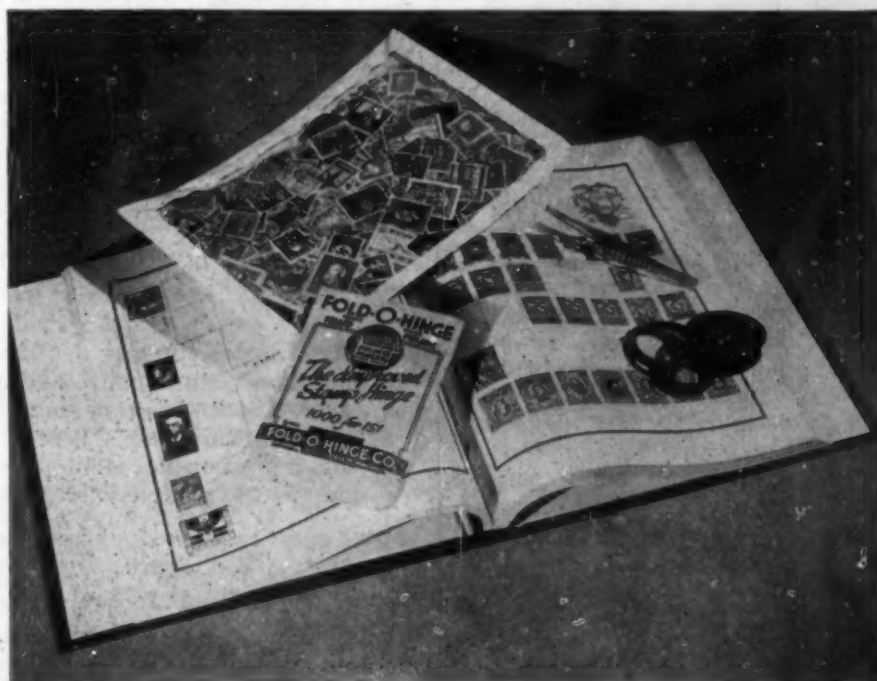
Watermark detectors—black trays on which to lay the stamp so that, with the aid of an appropriate fluid, it is possible to see the watermark—are available for 15¢ to \$1.50. There is even one electrical contrivance which sells for \$20. But the Harris *Ideal Detector*, which costs 35¢

wherever stamps are sold, is eminently satisfactory.

Benzine is the time-honored watermark fluid, but it has the disadvantage of being highly inflammable. Just as effective, and fireproof, is carbon tetrachloride, available as *Carbena* for 10¢ a bottle in the dime store. Fluids offered under a variety of trade names (*Tecto*, *Tectamark*, etc.) are the same chemical, though they may sell for up to twenty times the price.

The watermark detection is one means of ascertaining the issue of a stamp which was printed on different kinds of paper in the different issues. In using the fluid and tray, only a single drop of fluid should be used on a stamp. This will not injure either the face or the gum unless the stamp is photogravure printed, in which case the ink will dissolve. Actually, there are very few such photogravure stamps; they are discussed in the preliminary pages of Scott's *Catalogue*.

A perforation gauge measures the number of perforations in the standard two-centimeter postage stamp unit. Often a measure of perforations is the sole means of differentiating otherwise identical stamps of different issue dates. More than 50 different types of gauges are on the market, with prices ranging from 5¢ to \$7.50. Fancy gadgets are unnecessary; one of the best and cheapest is



A beginner's outfit might consist of album, stamps, hinges, tongs and magnifying glass, such as those shown above.

*Barnard's Herringbone Gauge* with accompanying millimeter scale (18¢, postpaid, from Max Ohlman, 116 Nassau St., NYC).

The literature of stamp collecting will probably begin to interest the new stamp collector at this stage. Many children's magazines and most Sunday newspapers contain a stamp column. These frequently tell the stories of stamps, and often contain useful suggestions.

If he is really interested, the stamp weeklies should be brought to the young collector's attention in due course. The outstanding ones include *Chambers Stamp Journal* (50¢ a year; Kalamazoo, Mich.), *Linn's Stamp News* (50¢ a year; Sidney, Ohio), *Philatelic Gossip* (\$1.50 a year; Holton, Kan.), *Mekeel's* (\$1 a year; Portland, Maine) and *Stamps* (\$2 a year; NYC). Sample copies are generally available free on request; among the five, he should be able to find one to suit his needs.

Also recommended are R. T. Robertson's *Stamp Collecting* (15¢; Educational Research Bureau, 1217 13th St., N.W., Washington, D. C.) and Ralph Kimble's *How to Collect Stamps* (Grosset & Dunlap, 50¢).

Stamp advertisements will prove intriguing, and your young stamp collector may find it hard to resist the blandishments of "\$10 for 5¢," or "75% discount from Scott's prices." The advertised 5¢ collection was actually found to be a mixture of 500 common stamps, and utterly worthless; and only forgeries or damaged copies could consistently be sold at the discounts quoted.

More advanced stamp collectors will be interested in "approval collections." These are sheets or booklets of stamps, sent out for inspection to a prospective buyer. He is expected to return unwanted items and to remit for those he keeps within a specified period—generally ten days. In this field it is wise to be on your guard. Deal only with firms which send good copies of stamps listed in Scott's *Catalogue*. Dealers who send damaged specimens, foreign revenues, telegraph stamps, labels, poster stamps and State revenues are trying to trade on your gullibility; avoid them.

Once you've found a good, reliable dealer, stick to him. There is no better way to add to a large general collection than through the approval method, and a reliable dealer who takes a personal interest in your collection and your needs is a great asset.

After a few years of world-wide collecting—in the course of which his *Modern Album* has become practically filled—the average enthusiast has developed a special interest in a particular area, country or type of stamp. He is then in a position to become a "specialist," concentrating on South American, Oceanic, British Empire or Chinese emissions; or on subject stamps, such as those portraying animals, authors, birds, bridges, ships, statues, waterfalls, etc.

Scott's printed *Specialty Albums* (\$5 to \$13.50 each) and Scott's loose-leaf printed pages for individual countries (25¢ to \$1.75 per country), listed in the *Scott Catalogue*, will be needed. Blank pages for new issues are available for \$2 per 100 plain, or \$2.50 per 100 quadrille-ruled. Ring binders and plain sheets to fit them are available in 10¢-stores and stationery stores; they meet the subject collector's requirements.

Membership in a national organization, such as the *Society of Philatelic Americans* (\$2 a year; Alfred Diamond, Secretary, 11 South La-

Salle St., Chicago), or the *American Philatelic Society* (\$3 a year; H. A. Davis, Secretary, 3421 Colfax St., Denver, Colo.) is worth considering. These Societies offer facilities for the sale or exchange of duplicates.

Advanced philatelists who wish to arrange individual or unusual displays of their materials make use of finely-bound, loose-leaf books, and hand-letter their "write-ups." It should be noted, however, that such a system of stamp display is not suited to the majority of stamp collectors, who have neither the time nor the ability to do a really good job of hand-lettering. In the line of such advanced albums, the Scott and the Elbe are the best known. Worth examining are Scott's *Wallace* (100 pages and binder, \$9) and Elbe's *Universal* (100 pages and binder, \$1.25), *Roosevelt* (50 pages and binder, \$6) and *Governor* (50 pages and binder, \$13.50).

Likewise for the advanced philatelist are stamp auctions, whether they be by mail or by direct, floor bidding. Unless you really know your

## DON'TS FOR COLLECTORS

*The following list of don'ts was compiled by an expert, as an aid to amateurs. They are intended merely as a guide. As with any hobby, stamp collecting can have no hard and fast rules; the thing to collect is the thing that gives you the most fun. So if you get a special pleasure from a collection of contemporary 2¢ stamps, cancelled in the upper right-hand corner with purple ink, don't let this list discourage you.*

**DON'T** let the financial aspect of stamp-collecting concern you unduly. The true philatelist is not concerned with the catalog value of his collection; a financially worthless but beautiful or complete collection can give just as much pleasure as an assortment of precious specimens.

**DON'T** accumulate sheets of unused United States stamps and expect to make a killing from them. Such stamps seldom bring more than face value, even after a generation. Leave it to the dealer to speculate in stamp values; you'll have much more fun if you stick to collecting them.

**DON'T** tie up your money in "First Day Covers" (stamps of various denominations, stuck onto envelopes, and cancelled on the dates of issue) or "Cached Covers" (marking various "special events," such as dedications of airports). There is virtually no market for such material, and its resale value is nil. The limitations of this type of collecting are too great to make it interesting to most people.

**DON'T** go in for "blocks of four" unless you are burdened with surplus money. You'll do much better if you spread your money over singles in greater variety.

**DON'T** jump into U.S. specialization without careful thought. Popularity and consequent buyer-competition have forced prices up to fantastic levels, and you can get a great deal more fun for the same money in another field.



stamps and their values, you are likely to overbid.

"Catalog value" is a term often misunderstood and sometimes abused. Scott's volume, the American collector's "bible," is not a price list. As a matter of fact its publisher has no stamps to sell. The evaluations listed in the *Catalogue* are estimates by the editors—careful students of stamps and market conditions—for fine specimens of the stamps listed. Many of the stamps in the list, particularly the cheaper, slow-moving or unattractive ones, are sold for less than catalog prices by dealers who are looking for rapid turnover. A discount of 25% to 33% is common at retail on the stamps found in the usual general collection. Damaged copies, for which

there is practically no demand, are sold at enormous price discounts. On the other hand, unusually fine copies, popular sets and unusual pieces which are in great demand frequently command a 25% to 100% premium over catalog listings. Any item offered at a very great discount, except as an avowed loss leader, must always be suspect, for the stamp market is relatively steady and well-supported.

Scott lists 2¢ as the minimum price for a stamp, taking into consideration the dealer's handling cost. But the sum of the list prices in an assortment does not properly represent the value of such a mixture; generally cheap mixtures are made up of very common stamps which have virtually no resale value.

## A Book Club Membership

... will be a welcome Christmas gift, provided you are careful to suit the club's offerings to the reader's requirements. Here are listed some outstanding book clubs, with details on each

There are book clubs to suit practically every reader's taste. They have sprung up rapidly over the past decade, encouraged, no doubt, by the success of the *Book-of-the-Month Club*, which was started in 1926 and now claims 600,000 members. There are book clubs which offer practically anything, from detective stories to fine, limited editions.

Most clubs are either owned and operated by publishers or have arrangements with publishers which enable them to supply the chosen books at what amounts to lower-than-retail prices. In some clubs, the price of each book is actually less than list price; other clubs offer a free book to new members; still others offer free "book dividends" after the purchase of a specified number of book selections. Members are generally required to buy from four to twelve books a year; only the *Classics Club* and the *Scientific Book Club*, among those studied by CU, have no fixed minimum requirements.

Many of the clubs publish monthly bulletins in which important books are reviewed—featuring, of course, reviews of their own current selec-

tions. Most clubs send each month's selection "on approval," often with the result that members buy books they don't really want to avoid the bother of returning them. To overcome the difficulty of differences in individual taste, some clubs have alternative lists from which members may select in advance the books they prefer.

If you live in a large city you may find membership in a department store book club advantageous. *Macy's Red Star Book Club*, in New York City, gives members a 30% rebate on every four books purchased at the publisher's list price; the rebate is in the form of a certificate, to be used for the purchase of a book at list price. Members make their choices from a long list put out by the store. Other department store clubs offer a choice of any book (except reprints) which the store regularly sells at list price, thus making possible a wider selection than the usual type of club can offer.

In the smaller communities, membership-by-mail book clubs fill a real need. And, wherever you live, if you want to have your books selected for you, or just want to save money on

the books you buy, joining a book club can be worthwhile. To help you find the club which will best satisfy your own needs, CU gives below the results of its survey of the best-known clubs.

**Book Find Club, Inc.** (480 Lexington Ave., NYC 17). This club, which started a little over two years ago, will print a 40,000 edition of its next selection. Each month a book with "meaning in these crucial times" is selected. Whether fiction, historical fiction or current history, and regardless of previous popularity, the books chosen are those which the editors feel are real "weapons in the war of ideas." Most of the books are printed in a special club edition, and the club price is \$1.35 for each book. Members are required to buy a minimum of four books a year. Alternative books from available past selections may be substituted for a current selection. Each month's selection is mailed, to be paid for after receipt, or returned within five days. Books are usually offered to members not more than three months after first publication. The club's current selection is reviewed in the monthly *Book Find News*, sent free to members. Also reviewed in this bulletin are other recommended books in the general field covered by the club, which the club will send to members, on request, at regular list price. Among *Book Find Club* selections of the past year have been "Argentine Diary," by Ray Josephs; "The Six Weeks' War," by Theodore Draper; "The Firing Squad," by Franz Weiskopf; "Strange Fruit," by Lillian Smith; "My Native Land," by Louis Adamic; "Battle Hymn of China," by Agnes Smedley. The current "book find" is Howard Fast's "Freedom Road."

**The Book League of America** (Garden City, N.Y.). Owned and operated by Doubleday, Doran. This club selects a pair of books each month, both reprinted in the club's own edition: a fiction best-seller, retailing in the original edition at \$2 to \$3; and a well-known "classic" (novel or anthology). Members pay a flat rate of \$1.39 for each month's double selection. A pair of books is offered free to each member upon joining. Members are required to accept all of the twelve pairs of books chosen by the club during the year, and no substitutions are allowed. Membership may be terminated by returning the last books sent. Recent books are made available between two months and a year after publication. There are no monthly bulletins or other special services. Recent club selections include such current books as "This Man and This Woman," by Katherine Brush; "Old Mrs. Camelot," by Emery Bonett; "Three of a Kind," by James Cain; "The Timber Beast,"

by Archie Binn; "Yours Is the Earth," by Margaret Vail. Recently selected classics include "Jefferson's Letters"; "Jane Eyre"; and the writings of Voltaire, Hawthorne and Turgenev. The current best-seller selection is "Look Away, Look Away," by Leslie P. White.

**Book-of-the-Month Club, Inc.** (385 Madison Ave., NYC 17). Dorothy Canfield, Clifton Fadiman, Christopher Morley and Henry Seidel Canby compose the editorial board which makes a monthly selection of one or sometimes two books which are offered to members as a single unit. Any type of new book which the board considers may be of interest to the club's large membership may be chosen. The club's price is \$2.50 to \$3 for the month's selection. Generally the price is less than list; sometimes the saving is as much as \$2.50; the average reduction is \$1. In addition, a free book is given to each new member, and with every second book-of-the-month purchased, members receive free the current "book dividend," six of which are chosen each year. Members are required to purchase four club selections a year, to be paid for after delivery; substitutions are allowed from past selections still in stock. Members must give advance notice of their intention to reject a selection or order a substitute. The *Book-of-the-Month Club News* gives members monthly advance reviews of club selections, and recommends and reviews other books. The following books were among those offered during the past year: "The World of Washington Irving," by Van Wyck Brooks; "Cluny Brown," by Margery Sharp and "Pastoral," by Nevil Shute; "The Time for Decision," by Sumner Welles; "Joseph, the Provider," by Thomas Mann; "Fair Stood the Wind for France," by H. E. Bates and "Lost Island," by James Norman Hall; "The American Character," by Denis Brogan and "Young 'Un," by Herbert Best. The current book-of-month is "Brave Men," by Ernie Pyle.

**The Classics Club** (1 Park Ave., NYC 16). A selection committee selects books from the best-known classics for reprint in the club's editions. Members may choose between two bindings: regular (terra-cotta cloth with imitation gold lettering), at \$1; or deluxe (sand-colored buckram with gold lettering), at \$1.50. A free book is given to each new member. All books are sent on approval, and there is no minimum requirement as to the number of books a member must buy. Sixteen titles are currently being sent out, and members may indicate advance selections instead of having the entire list sent, and returning unwanted books. The books are sent, one each month, to be paid for on receipt. The following selections are among those which have been offered: Homer's "Iliad,"

Fitzgerald's translation of "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," Plato's Dialogues, Thoreau's "Walden," Paldgrave's "Golden Treasury."

**Detective Book Club** (1 Park Ave., NYC 16). This club offers members its own editions of three current detective fiction books each month, bound in one volume. Members pay \$2 for each volume, and a free book is given to new members. A minimum of four selections must be purchased each year. A monthly bulletin describing selections for the following month enables members to reject in advance books they do not wish to buy. Authors represented in this club's recent selections include Erle Stanley Gardner, Rex Stout, Agatha Christie and Elizabeth Daly. The current selection contains "The Corpse without a Clue," by R. A. J. Walling; "The Black Path of Fear," by Cornell Woolrich; "Death Strikes at Heron House," by Kerry O'Neil.

**Doubleday One Dollar Book Club** (Garden City, N.Y.). Owned and operated by Doubleday, Doran. This club offers its own editions of best-seller fiction, with emphasis on popular authors. Members pay a flat rate of \$1 plus postage per book, and are required to buy at least six books a year, either from the club's monthly selections or

from "alternates" chosen from the 300 books reviewed by the club in the course of the year. Members notify the club in advance if they do not want the month's selection, or may return it within ten days. Books are made available to members three months to a year after first publication. The monthly *Bulletin* describes the current selection and reviews books on the alternate list. Titles issued during the past year include: "Fire Bell in the Night," by Constance Robertson; "Good Night, Sweet Prince," by Gene Fowler; "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," by Betty Smith; "For Whom the Bell Tolls," by Ernest Hemingway; "Flint," by Charles G. Norris. The current selection is "American Mercury Reader," edited by Lawrence E. Spivak and Charles Angott.

**The Heritage Club** (595 Madison Ave., NYC). The membership quota of this club, currently limited to 30,000 because of paper shortage, is reported as filled at this writing. The club puts out its own editions of the "classics" at \$3 for each volume as it appears, or \$32.40 in advance for twelve books a year (\$2.70 per book). With each fourth book purchased, a member may select as a free bonus one of the cheaper *Heritage Reprints*. Twelve books must be purchased each year, but members may make up to three substitutions from an alternative list of previously issued books. Members vote on the books to be published, and receive an annual prospectus describing selections for the forthcoming year. Titles to be issued in the coming year include Poe's "Tales of Mystery and Imagination," illustrated by William Sharp; "The Heritage Omnibus," edited by George Macy; the Dryden translation of Virgil's "Aeneid," illustrated by John Flaxman; Dante's "Divine Comedy," illustrated by William Blake.

**The Junior Literary Guild** (Garden City, N.Y.). Owned and operated by Doubleday, Doran. New books of all types—fiction, nature, science, history, art and travel—are offered in four age groups: Group P (primary books), Group A (boys and girls from 9 to 11), Group B (girls from 12 to 16), Group C (boys from 12 to 16). Books are published in the club's own edition, illustrated and made with strong bindings. They are selected by an editorial board of four: Helen Ferris, Angelo Patri, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt and Mrs. Sidonie M. Gruenberg. Members pay a flat rate of \$1.65 per book, payable on receipt of each month's selection. This averages about 25% below publishers' prices. There are no alternative choices, and all twelve of the club's yearly selections must be purchased. Members may, however, transfer from one age group to another, should selections prove too elementary or too difficult. *Young Wings* is the Junior Guild's monthly magazine.

## A NOTE on reprint editions

If you read a lot and prefer to have your books selected for you and sent at regular intervals, you can save money and shopping time by joining the right book club. But if you are satisfied to read best sellers after they have been published for a while and have stood the test of reader-approval, membership in a book club is not so likely to save you money. Often inexpensive reprints of a volume are made a relatively short time after first publication. *Pocket Books*, *Triangle Books*, *Tower Fiction*, *Penguin Books*, *Modern Library*, *Blue Ribbon Books*, *New Home Library* and *Sun Dial Press*, to name only a few, often reprint best-selling books within the year after they have made their appearance, and sell them for a fraction of their original price. Thus, for books in which timeliness and quality of binding are not major considerations, you can get a great deal more for your reading dollar from a judicious selection of reprints, buying only a few timely books in their original editions.



Typical of recent club selections are: (for older boys) "American Tanks and Tank Destroyers," by Elizabeth Mallett Conger; "Logging Chance," by M. H. Leshner; "Abraham Lincoln," by James Dougherty; (for older girls) "The Girl Without a Country," by Martha Lee Poston; "New Worlds for Josie," by Kathryn Worth; "Love's Enchantment," collected by Helen Ferris; (intermediate) "Rabbit Hill," by Robert Lawson; "Decky's Secret," by Anne Molloy; "Chanchó: A Boy and His Pig in Peru," by B. Sutherland Stark; (primary) "Angelo, the Naughty One," by Helen Garrett; "Katy No-Pocket," by Emmy Payne; "Red Light Green Light—Stop and Go," by Golden MacDonald.

**The Limited Editions Club** (595 Madison Ave., NYC). This club specializes in deluxe editions of the classics, specially designed and illustrated, in editions limited to 1500. The club reports that its quota is filled at this writing. The membership fee, when paid a year in advance, is \$108 plus carrying charges, or \$10 plus carrying charges for each month's selection. Twelve books are generally selected by membership vote each year, described in advance in the annual prospectus. No book may be refused or returned, and there are no alternative choices. The past year's selections include: The Dryden translation of Virgil's "Aeneid"; Gautier's "Mademoiselle de Maupin"; Gogol's "Chichikov's Journeys (Dead Souls)"; Sinclair Lewis' "Babbitt"; "A Child's Garden of Verses," by Robert Louis Stevenson; "The Red Badge of Courage," by Stephen Crane; Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi," and "The Complete Sherlock Holmes."

**The Literary Guild of America** (Garden City, N.Y.). Owned and operated by Doubleday, Doran. An editorial board selects, each month, a current book of the best-seller type, usually fiction, to be reprinted in the club's edition. Guild selections, made available to members on the day of publication, are sold through the club for \$2 each plus postage—from 50¢ to \$1.50 less than the same book in the publisher's edition. One book is offered as a new-membership gift, and a free book (the club's choice) is given with every fourth *Guild* book purchased. Members are required to buy at least four books a year, but substitutions may be made from previous *Guild* selections. Books may either be rejected before they are mailed, or returned within five days. The club's magazine, *Wings*, is mailed to members monthly. It reviews the next month's *Guild* selection and other recommended books. Among the past year's *Guild* titles were "The Building of Jalna," by Mazo de la Roche; "Earth and High Heaven," by Gwethalyn Graham; "Green Dolphin Street," by Elizabeth Goudge;

"Simone," by Lion Feuchtwanger; "Anna & the King of Siam," by Margaret Landon; "Leave Her to Heaven," by Ben Ames Williams. The current selection is "Hard Facts," by Howard Spring.

**Peoples Book Club** (P.O. Box 6570A, Chicago 80; also addressed at 1230 Sixth Ave., NYC 20). Operated by Sears-Roebuck by arrangement with Simon & Schuster. This club, also known as *Sears Peoples Book Club*, was started a little over a year ago with advertisements in Sears Catalogs, its sole publicity medium. It now has about 200,000 members. It reprints, in uniform bindings, current best sellers of various publishers, using plates from the original type. A new book is issued every month and a half, and is made available to members from five to eight months after publication. Members pay \$1.66 plus postage for each book which may retail at \$2.50 to \$4. A gift book goes to each new member and a dividend book, chosen by the club, is given with every fourth book purchased. This club has a minimum yearly purchase requirement of four books, members rejecting any unwanted selection in advance after reading its review in the monthly bulletin, *The Peoples Choice*. Selections of the past year included "Canal Town," by Samuel H. Adams; "Yankee Lawyer,"

by Arthur Train; "Mrs. Parkington," by Louis Bromfield; "Journey in the Dark," by Martin Flavin; "Here Is Your War," by Ernie Pyle; and "The Valley of Decision," by Marcia Davenport. The current selection is "Emperor's Physician," by P. G. Perkins. **Scientific Book Club** (76 Ninth Ave., NYC). This club offers, at regular retail prices, publishers' editions of popular scientific books for the layman. A new book is selected every month by an editorial committee. Every selection is mailed, to be returned if not wanted. A gift book, chosen by the club, goes to new members. In addition, this club will send members, on request, "any book in print in English" at the publisher's list price plus postage. The editorial committee will make special recommendations to individual members. The *Scientific Book Club Review* goes out monthly to members. Among the books issued last year were "A Scientific Theory of Culture," by Bronislaw Malinowski; "The Navajo Door," by Alexander and Dorothea Leighton; "Peace, Plenty and Petroleum," by B. T. Brooks; "Rockets (A Prelude to Space Travel)," by Willy Ley. The current selection is "Look to the Frontiers," by Peattie. George A. Baitsell's "Science in Progress" (3rd series) is the new-members gift now being offered.

## Phonograph Records

... make an ideal gift for music-lovers. An expert here rates important classical recordings of the past year, discusses the state of the industry, and predicts things to come after the war

Since CU last reported on phonograph records and the record industry (see the *Reports*, November 1943), there has been some change with regard to the general quality and quantity of the discs put out by the major and independent record producers, though the change has not been great.

Since last year there has been a slight relaxation of shellac quotas by WPB. This has enabled the record companies—particularly *Victor* and *Columbia*—to do a little better in both the amount and the quality of their output. *Victor* and *Columbia* playing surfaces have, as a result, become somewhat quieter and more consistent in quality. Furthermore, many items from the classical music repertoire which have been missing from dealers' shelves for the past couple of years have become available once more. If this trend con-

tinues as the war draws to a close, the classical catalogs of the two major record companies will begin to approximate their prewar completeness.

While *Victor* and *Columbia* have been forced to rely for their new releases on their master storage files or on matrices imported from England and South America, *Decca* and the other smaller companies have made their peace with the American Federation of Musicians (AFL), and have been turning out new releases as quickly as they can get them off the presses. Few of these companies have made attempts, so far, to expand their catalogs beyond the popular and into the classical field, so that they do not compete much with *Victor* and *Columbia*. This is probably due in large part to the fact that these two big manufacturers have under contract—recording ban or no

—most of the "big name" interpreters of serious music.

#### THE RECORDING BAN

A year ago, the two major difficulties facing the record industry were the shortage of shellac and the ban imposed by the American Federation of Musicians on musicians' recording sessions. Today, while the shellac shortage is receding into the background, the controversy with the AFM is more serious than ever—particularly with respect to Victor and Columbia. Because the situation is complex and tangled, some words of explanation may not be amiss here.

The basic issue in the whole web of controversies between the Musicians' Union and the record companies has been largely one of "canned music" as a cause of technological unemployment among musicians. The Union, represented by its president, James C. Petrillo, contends that every record made available to radio stations, theaters and cafes means less work for musicians. Therefore, they believe, the use of records should be restricted to private homes and for non-profit purposes; failing this, a performance fee should be paid for all records used for commercial or broadcast purposes. To implement this demand, the Union proposes that the record companies pay to the Union's unemployment fund a percentage royalty based on disc sales, in addition to the regular union scale paid to the musicians who participate in the recording sessions.

The recording companies—particularly Victor and Columbia—balk at this. If any royalties are to be paid, the companies hold, they should go to the performing artists rather than to the Union. The companies consider the Union's general unemployment fund as a "slush fund," pure and simple. The Union, on the other hand, feels that the royalties should go to help the musicians who are put out of jobs by the commercial use of records, rather than to those who are employed in making the records. The

result of these conflicting views has been a see-saw battle through government agencies and the courts. It is likely to be resolved, in the end, only by a decision from the U. S. Supreme Court, which will eventually be called upon to rule on the companies' contention that the Union is acting as a monopoly in restraint of trade.

As a result of this situation the independent companies, including Decca, have lined up against Victor and Columbia and have signed contracts with the AFM. The smaller independents have felt that they had to take this step to continue existence. Decca has for the past year enjoyed the enormous advantage of having the popular-record field practically all to itself so far as the latest hit tunes have been concerned.

Furthermore, with the shellac shortage, Victor and Columbia have found it well-nigh impossible to keep up with consumer demand for records already in their catalogs, and so the recording ban has so far had little effect on them from the point of view of classical-record sales. However, their inability to meet contractual obligations to their classical recording artists has been a big headache to the record company executives, who stand in constant fear of a mass bolt of the artists to Decca or to some other independent company, should one of these decide to compete seriously for the classical-record market.

In the field of popular music, the ban has hurt Victor and Columbia a good deal, though even here they have been able to put up something of a fight. Recent revivals of old tunes—and there are rumors that these have been company-inspired—have enabled the companies to make substantial sales on re-issues of pre-ban recordings, with resultant benefits to the music publishers, the radio companies and the record companies involved.

The ever-diminishing backlog of classical recordings in the Victor and Columbia master vaults has had another major effect: the importation of matrices from recording sessions in England and South America. Recordings from England have been used for many years and issued under domestic labels; for the most part, they have been greatly superior technically to the American products. But the South American and Mexican matrices leave much to be desired.

If Victor and Columbia cannot settle their differences with the AFM for another year, record buyers can look forward to two major developments: an increasing number of imported re-pressings; and an attempt by Decca or one of the other independent companies to corner the classical-music market, after luring artists away from their non-working Victor and Columbia contracts.

#### POSTWAR PROSPECTS

There have been many rumors from time to time, to the effect that all current phonograph and recording equipment would become obsolete immediately after the war, to be replaced by radical new methods of reproduction such as sound-on-film, sound-on-wire, or sound on embossed cellophane tape. But while there has unquestionably been enormous advance in the use of these media for recording, record buyers won't have to scrap their radio-phonographs for some time to come.

A little consideration makes the reasons clear. In the first place, none of the methods mentioned above has yet been perfected for home use. On the whole, they do not yet offer really high-fidelity reproduction of music. All are at least as perishable as discs or even more so. And for the present, at least, none is as amenable to mass-production technique as are discs. Furthermore, it's a safe guess that the record companies are not likely to scrap their huge investments in disc-manufacturing equipment until they can be absolutely sure of a huge consumer market for their new products.

The new sound-on-wire technique is likely, however, to come into certain specialized use soon after the war. It is likely to offer strong competition to the presently-used dictating-machine setups, particularly for use in recording conferences or meetings. It will be a tool in radio and telephonic research. And it may find its way into the home for recording radio programs, enabling the radio listener to hear consecutively two programs broadcast at the same time over different stations, or programs put on the air when the listener is not at home.

But record buyers can look forward to postwar improvements in the conventional discs. The records themselves will probably be made of a light, unbreakable plastic material having a much lower inherent noise-level than the present product. The

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trend will be toward slow-speed discs (33 1/3 revolutions per minute) of the type used now by broadcasting stations. These will be 15 inches in diameter, and so will be able to handle ten to 15 minutes of music on each side. And the quality of the recording will be greatly improved as to frequency range and dynamics. It is thought that this will be made possible largely through the use of a vertical cut (hill-and-dale) system of recording, in place of the present lateral-cut system.

Postwar phonographs will, of course, be designed to take advantage of these improvements. And adapter turntables, containing both the dual-speed feature and the all-purpose pickup for both vertical- and lateral-cut discs will be made available to those who continue to use their pre-war machines.

#### CLASSICAL RECORD RATINGS

The following notes, prepared by CU's record consultant, present an expert's opinion on the most significant of the recordings issued during the past year. They are intended primarily as a guide for those who wish to give records as gifts. When you buy records for yourself, you should supplement the expert opinion with your own judgment of what you like.

**Bach-Stokowski Album:** Collection includes orchestral transcriptions by Leopold Stokowski of the first movement from the Organ Trio Sonata No. 1 in E-flat; the aria, "Es Ist Vollbracht," from the St. John Passion; the Organ Prelude and Fugue in E Minor; the chorale-prelude, "Ich Ruf' zu Dir, Herr Jesu Christ"; and the "Adoremus Te," by Palestrina. Played by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski. *Victor* M-963, \$3.50. Stokowski's lush orchestral palette is less in evidence here than usually, much to the advantage of the music. Of outstanding interest are the St. John Passion aria and the Organ Prelude and Fugue in E Minor. Recording variable in quality, ranging from excellent to coarse, probably as a result of the fact that the six record sides were made at various times between 1935 and 1942.

**Bach:** Organ Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor; Chorale-Prelude, "Wir Glauben All' an Einen Gott." Played by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra under Dimitri Mitropoulos. *Columbia* X-244, \$2.50. Two of Bach's finest organ works in effective, though not particularly sensitive, orchestral arrangements. Unsatisfactory balance makes the Mitropoulos version of the Fantasia and Fugue sound unduly heavy on the brass and woodwinds, and the conductor's reading of the Fantasia is ultra-romantic.

The Fugue comes off more successfully, as does the chorale-prelude.

**Bach:** Organ Fugue in G Minor ("Little G Minor Fugue"). Played by the All-American Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski. *Columbia* 11992-D, \$1. Stokowski's excellent arrangement of this famous fugue fares well in performance, but only fairly well in reproduction.

**Bach:** Organ Fugue ala Gigue. Played by the Boston Pops Orchestra under Arthur Fiedler. *Victor* 10-1070, 75¢. Expert arrangement, performance and recording of a delightful Bach tidbit. Will be liked even by those who claim to dislike the music of the Leipzig master.

**Bach:** Organ Prelude and Fugue in E-flat Major ("St. Ann"). Played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Frederick Stock; *Victor* M-958, \$2.50. Fugue only, played by Joseph Bonnet (organ); *Victor* 11-8528, \$1. Stock's orchestral transcription of the monumental St. Ann Prelude and Fugue comes off most effectively in the Prelude, less well in the Fugue. On the whole, the recording is rich and resonant, but it is rather fuzzy in the more complex portions of the music. Those who like their Bach straight will find much to enjoy in Bonnet's fine reading of the Fugue on the John Hayes Hammond organ at Gloucester, Mass. The recording is excellent.

**Bach:** Clavier Toccata and Fugue in E Minor. Played by Rudolph Serkin (piano). *Columbia* 71594-D, \$1. First recorded performance of an important Bach keyboard work. A straightforward reading, adequately reproduced.

**Bach:** Violin and Clavier Sonata in E Minor. Played by Adolf Busch (violin) and Artur Balsam (piano). *Columbia* 71582-D, \$1. A little-known but splendid Bach opus, excellently played and recorded.

**Beethoven:** Quartet No. 15 in A Minor, Op. 132. Played by the Budapest String Quartet. *Columbia* M-545, \$5.50. Superb performance of one of the great "last" quartets of Beethoven. The recording sounds excellent on a high-fidelity phonograph, a trifle harsh on smaller machines.

**Beethoven:** Trio No. 7 in B-flat ("Archduke"), Op. 97. Played by Artur Schnabel (piano), Jascha Heifetz, (violin) and Emanuel Feuermann (cello). *Victor* M-949, \$5.50. Beethoven's last, and generally considered his finest trio, in a badly-needed modern recording. The performance by the three celebrated virtuosos is such as to belie the adage concerning rugged individualism among solo performers.

**Burl Ives:** The Wayfaring Stranger ("Poor Wayfaring Stranger," "Black Is the Color of My True Love's Hair," "Foggy, Foggy Dew," "Buck-Eye Jim," "Bold Soldier," "Sow Took the Measles," "Blue Tail Fly"); *Asch* 345, \$2.75. ("Wee Cooper o' Fife," "Riddle Song," "Cowboy's Lament," "Tam

Pierce," "I Know Where I'm Going," "I Know My Love," "Peter Gray," "Sweet Betsy from Pike," "On Top of Old Smoky," "Darlin' Cory," "Leather Winged Bat," "Cotton-Eyed Joe"). *Columbia* C-103, \$2.50. Burl Ives, American folksinger familiar to thousands of radio listeners, gives us in these two albums his inimitable versions of some of the gems of our American folksong literature. No one who enjoys folksong should be without these sets in his music library. Both recordings are excellent.

**Blues:** "Careless Love," "T.B. Blues," "Until My Baby Comes Home," "Too Evil to Cry," "Ain't Gonna Be Treated This Way," "Lonesome Train." Sung by Josh White, Sonny Terry, Champion Jack Dupree, Woody Guthrie and others. *Asch* 550, \$5. Another and harsher aspect of the American folksong is revealed here by some of its greatest interpreters. The recording is very fine.

**Chausson:** Symphony in B-flat. Played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Frederick Stock. *Victor* M-950, \$4.50. A comparatively little-known, but nevertheless fine symphony by one of Cesar Franck's pupils receives an able reading and expert recording at the hands of the late Dr. Stock.

**Corelli:** Sonata in F for Organ and Strings. Played by E. Power Biggs (organ) with the Arthur Fiedler Sinfonietta. *Victor* 10-1105, 75¢. A highly attractive and melodic work by the celebrated 17th-century composer and violinist. Performance and recording very good.

**Debussy:** "En Blanc et Noir." Played by Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson (duo-pianists). *Columbia* X-241, \$2.50. Good performance of a somber, late Debussy opus, written under the stress of World War I. Fair recording.

**Debussy:** Images for Orchestra, No. 1 ("Gigues") and No. 3 ("Rondes de Printemps"). Played by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra under Pierre

#### If you value your records

... watch for the results of CU's tests on phonograph needles. Preliminary tests now under way indicate that the end results will show spectacular differences among different brands of so-called permanent needles on the market with respect to the number of records they'll play and the rapidity with which they'll make your records noisy.

As soon as tests have been completed, CU will be able to tell you which needles to use if you want to give your records long, relatively scratch-free life and get faithful reproduction.

Monteux. *Victor M-954*, \$2.50. Excellent performance and recording of two rarely-played works by the French impressionist master. While it is not as inspired as "Iberia," the second of the orchestral Images (*Columbia M-491*), they are worth having, if for no other reason than that they make the complete set available on records for the first time.

**Debussy:** Sonata No. 3 for Violin and Piano. Played by Joseph Szigeti (violin) and Andor Foldes (piano). Debussy's "last musical will and testament" here receives a sensitive and knowing interpretation as well as a very fine recording.

**Early American Ballads** ("Patriotic Diggers," "The Greenland Fishery," "Ballad of Saratoga," "Peter Parker's Song," "Unfortunate Miss Bailey," "Escape of Old John Webb," "Nantucket Lullaby," "Ballad of the Tea Party"). Sung by John and Lucy Allison with Chorus and Instrumental Ensemble. *Keynote 102*, \$2.75. Old tunes dating from the American Revolution and the War of 1812, sung with superb spirit and enthusiasm. "Unfortunate Miss Bailey" alone is worth the price of the album.

**Falla:** Spanish Dance No. 1 ("La Vida Breve"). Played by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra under Vladimir Golschmann. *Victor 11-8592*, \$1. A badly-needed new recording of the colorful and popular excerpt from Manuel de Falla's one-act opera.

**Fernandez:** Batuque. Played by the National Symphony Orchestra under Hans Kindler. *Victor 11-8608*, \$1. This Negro ritual dance by the Brazilian composer Fernandez has been very successful in concert halls here. It has finally been extended to records in this fine performance and recording.

**Foots:** Suite for Strings in E, Op. 63. Played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitsky. *Victor M-962*, \$2.50. A beautiful work by one of the first American symphonic composers to achieve international fame. The performance is superlative, but only a high-fidelity phonograph will do the recording justice.

**Gould:** Latin-American Symphonette. Played by the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra under Jose Iturbi. *Victor M-964*, \$3.50. Brilliantly orchestrated work by a young American composer and conductor, with an especially fine slow movement in tango form. Recording and performance very fine.

**Gretchaninoff:** "Over the Steppe," and Rachmaninoff: "Harvest of Sorrow." Sung by Alexander Kipnis (bass) with Celius Dougherty at the piano. *Victor 11-8595*, \$1. These two somber and very beautiful Russian songs find ideal expression through the voice of Kipnis. The recording is very good.

**Handel:** The Messiah ("Pastoral Symphony"). Played by Symphony Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham. *Colum-*

*bia 71606-D*, \$1. A re-issue of an old recording, with a very beautiful performance of an instrumental interlude from Handel's famous oratorio.

**Haydn:** Overture, "The Uninhabited Island." Played by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra under Fabian Seitzky. *Victor 11-8487*, \$1. A virtually unknown but highly dramatic overture, performed with plenty of spirit and well recorded.

**Haydn:** Symphony No. 103 in E-flat ("Drum Roll"). Played by the Hallé Orchestra under Leslie Heward. *Columbia M-547*, \$3.50. Fine English recording of perhaps the most interesting—though not the most often played—of Haydn's symphonies.

**Holst:** The Planets, Op. 32 ("Mars the Bringer of War," "Mercury the Winged Messenger," "Venus the Bringer of Peace," "Jupiter the Bringer of Jollity"). Played by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra under Sir Ernest Macmillan. *Victor M-929*, \$4.50. Four of the seven movements from "The Planets," by the late English master, Gustav Holst, receive a fine performance here. The highly resonant recording enhances the effect of the music, which should be a natural for a future edition of Walt Disney's "Fantasia."

**Mozart:** Divertimento in E-flat, K. 563. Played by Jascha Heifetz (violin), William Primrose (viola) and Emanuel Feuermann (cello). *Victor M-959*, \$4.50. This Mozart Divertimento stands out as the finest and most beautiful creation of its kind in the string-trio literature. The warmly conceived reading and fine recording here given may lead this work to achieve some of the popularity it deserves.

**Mozart:** Don Giovanni ("Batti, Batti, o bel Massetto," "Vedrai, Carino"). Sung by Bidu Sayao (soprano) with orchestra under Erich Leinsdorf. *Columbia 71577-D*, \$1. An excellent version of these popular Mozart arias.

**Mozart:** Overture, "The Marriage of Figaro." Played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham. *Columbia 71606-D*, \$1. The best all-round recording so far made of this most popular of Mozart's opera overtures.

**Mozart:** Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major, K. 414. Played by Louis Kentner (piano) with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham. *Columbia M-544*, \$3.50. An exquisite piano concerto, beautifully performed and even more beautifully recorded.

**Mozart:** Quartet No. 16 in E-flat, K. 428. Played by the Busch String Quartet. *Columbia M-529*, \$4.50. A conscientious but uneven performance of one of Mozart's most ingratiating chamber works. Excellent recording.

**Mozart:** Symphony No. 34 in C Major, K. 338. Played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Thomas Beecham. *Columbia M-548*, \$3.50. Flawlessly modeled reading of the delightful

"Little Symphony"; very fine recording. **Oklahoma:** Excerpts. Sung by the original cast and chorus, with orchestra under Jay Blackton. *Decca A-359*, \$5. The best of the music from the Rogers-Hammerstein musical, sung for the most part in a gay and spirited fashion. Fair recording and surfaces.

**Olga Coelho Song Recital.** "Andalusian Song" (Segovia); "Nina Nana" (de Falla); "De Blanca Terra," "Kurikinga Mapanawi," "Rei Madou M. Chama," "Bambalele," "Quebra O Coco Menina," "Dem-Bau" (Guarnieri). *Hargail MW-700*, \$2.50. The gifted Brazilian singer accompanies herself on the guitar in this fascinating selection of Spanish, Inca and Brazilian songs. As might be expected, she is heard to best advantage in the songs of her native country. Good recording with fair record surfaces.

**Earl Robinson:** Songs for Americans ("Jesse James," "John Henry," "Grey Goose," "Abe Lincoln," "Joe Hill," "Horace Greeley," "John Brown"). *General Records Co. G-30*, \$3.50. Three stirring old American folk songs and some of the best of Robinson's own compositions figure in this album, which features the guitar and voice of the composer of "Ballad for Americans." Very good recording.

**Schubert:** "Die Junge Nonne" and "Der Doppelgänger." Sung by Lotte Lehmann (soprano) with Paul Ulanowsky at the piano. *Columbia 71509-D*, \$1. Two of Schubert's finest songs. Mme. Lehmann fares better as the young nun from the convent than as the horror-stricken lover of "The Phantom Double" who, according to the text, should be a man in any case.

**Schubert:** Piano Sonata No. 9 in A Major, Op. 120. Played by Robert Casadesu (piano). *Columbia X-236*, \$2.50. A fine interpretation of a lovely piano work, given a very fine recording.

**Shostakovich:** Age of Gold Ballet ("Polka" and "Russian Dance"). Played by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra under Vladimir Golschmann. *Victor 11-8592*, \$1. A good performance of the very amusing "Golden Age" excerpts by one of Russia's modern masters is marred by a poorly-balanced recording.

**Shostakovich:** Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 40. Played by Gregor Piatigorsky (cello) and Valentin Pavlovsky (piano). *Columbia M-551*, \$3.50. An important addition to the slim solo cello repertoire. Excellent performance and recording.

**Thomas:** Overture, "Mignon." Played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. *Victor 11-8545*, \$1. Superb performance of a tattered old warhorse. The recording does full justice to the fine performance.

**Vaughn-Williams:** Overture to "The Wasps" of Aristophanes. Played by the Hallé Orchestra under Malcolm Sargent. *Columbia 71605-D*, \$1. A charming, light overture in folksong style.



Good performance, with excellent recording.

**Villa-Lobos:** "The Child's Family." Played by Artur Rubenstein (piano). *Victor* M-970, \$2.50. This colorful, though sometimes brittle suite of pieces by Brazil's foremost composer here receives a superb performance and a good recording.

**Wagner:** Excerpts from Act III, "Tristan and Isolde." Sung by Lauritz Melchior (tenor) and Robert Jansen (baritone) with Columbia Opera Orchestra under Erich Leinsdorf and Colon Opera Orchestra under Roberto Kinsky. *Columbia* M-550, \$5.50. This album includes the Prelude to Act III and most of the remainder of the act, beginning with Tristan's awakening at Kareol and ending with Isolde's arrival. Vocally the album is superb, but orchestrally it is only fair, particularly on the eight sides recorded in Argentina. The same is true of the recording; the South

American sides leave the orchestra in the background in relation to the voices.

**Walton:** "Belshazzar's Feast." Sung by Dennis Noble (baritone) with Huddersfield Choral Society, Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Brass Bands under William Walton, *Victor* M-974, \$5.50. Written in 1930, while the composer was still in his twenties, this tremendously high-powered setting of the old biblical episode ranks as one of the great choral masterpieces of our time. Certainly this is a magnificent performance; its sheer kinetic impact is overwhelming. If for no other reason, this album would still stand supreme as probably the most magnificent large-scale recording ever made.

**Weber:** Waltz in E-flat. Played by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra under Fabien Sevitzky. *Victor* 11-8609, \$1. A delightful piano tidbit in a felicitous string arrangement. Beautifully played and recorded.

George Brunis (trombone), Max Kaminsky (cornet) and Muggsy Spanier (cornet). The groupings of the artists mingle and overlap and a great many other available jazz-men sit in on one or more sessions. The smaller independent recording companies draw their talent from the same general group.

As a result of small editions and limited pressings, the small companies' prices are somewhat higher than those of the big companies. The standard price is 75¢ to \$1 for 10-inch records, \$1.50 for 12-inch discs. The record material this year runs from fair to good—much better than the previous year, when the range was terrible to fair. The technical and recording level is generally high, except for re-issues of 1923 recordings and the dubbings of privately-recorded sessions.

Few record stores stock all or even most of the listed jazz labels, and orders placed through your local record store may run into long delays from the smaller companies. Commodore maintains its own retail outlet, the Commodore Music Shop, 136 East 42 St., New York City. They also stock all the other independent labels, and will accept mail orders. Other retail stores specializing in hot jazz and accepting mail orders include:

Automatic Sales Co., 56 E. Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis.

David Dean Smith, Inc., 262 Elm St., New Haven, Conn.

Jazz Man Record Shop, 6331

## Jazz Records

An expert's opinion of "hot jazz" recorded in the past year, with suggestions on the discs and albums you might select as Christmas gifts for your friends

Interest in good jazz has definitely passed the "fad" and "cult" stages; it is now widely accepted as a subject for serious study, a source of real musical enjoyment, and a permanent addition to our musical culture.

In the past year, good jazz has had its best year since its main flowering in the 1920's. In variety, if not in volume, there has been an amazing amount of good jazz recorded. The two big companies—Victor and Columbia—have contributed nothing new, and only a little in the way of re-issues. But the smaller, independent record companies have been more active than ever before.

In the present chaotic state of the record industry, hardly any current record can be counted upon as being available. The small independents bring out their records in very small editions, which frequently become collectors' items almost as soon as they are issued. One company complains, "We can't even supply the critics, let alone the customers."

Since the essence of good jazz is improvisation, it has virtually its only permanent existence on phonograph records. And since improvisation is so important, the emphasis is on the

performing artist—the creator of the variations—rather than on the composer. It is axiomatic, then, that the best recorded jazz is produced by the recording companies which have the services of the best jazz players.

Blue Note and Commodore are outstanding recording companies in the jazz field. Blue Note specializes in jazz of the "purist" type, but everything they produce is in fine musical taste, and is generally enjoyed by even those who know little about jazz. Much of their recent production has been by a predominantly Negro group, centering about Edmond Hall (clarinet), and including Vic Dickenson (trombone), James P. Johnson (piano), Sidney DeParis (trumpet) and others. The records are mainly small-band improvisations, with a few piano solos.

Commodore, which pioneers in jazz recording, carries a somewhat wider list. They do make a few concessions to commercialism, but on the whole they maintain a high quality. Much of their production centers around the so-called Chicago school, generally under the leadership of Eddie Condon. Among their artists are Pee Wee Russell (clarinet),

### Watch for . . .

Work on the following reports, among others, is either now under way or scheduled to begin soon:

Women's Slips

Phonograph Needles

Muslin & Percale Sheets

Knitting Yarns

Toilet Water

Laundry Soaps

Cooking Fats & Oils

Mayonnaise

Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood 38, Calif.

Jive Lane, 14 Tillman Place, San Francisco 8, Calif.

Promenade Music Centre, 83 Bloor St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Record Rendezvous, 105 E. Hanover St., Trenton, N. J.

## JAZZ RECORDINGS

The following list, compiled for CU by an expert in the field, includes important productions of the leading jazz record companies during the past year:

**Asch:** Has produced an album of songs by Leadbelly (Huddy Ledbetter); an album of Jazz Variations; re-issues, including Fletcher Henderson and James P. Johnson; an album featuring Mary Lou Williams and a small band. Musically good, mechanically fair. Outstanding record; James P. Johnson, "Impression" (12-inch).

**Blue Note Records:** (767 Lexington Ave., NYC). See notes in text on quality of performances. Musically excellent, mechanically good. Outstanding records: Edmond Hall's Blue Note Jazz Men, "High Society" (BN 28), and "Royal Garden" (BN 29); Edmond Hall All-Star Quintet, "Blue Interval" (BN 31); James P. Johnson Piano Solos, "Back Water Blues" (BN 25), and "Arkansaw Blues" (BN 27); Joshua White Trio, "Careless Love" (BN 23).

**Brunswick:** Carry on their last year's policy of re-issuing jazz classics. Musically good, mechanically good. Only current album is "Ellingtonia" (No. 2). Older ones which may still be available include Jimmy Noone's Apex Club Orchestra (Album B-1006); Benny Goodman and his Boys, "Chicago Jazz Classics" (Album B-1007); "Riverboat Jazz Album," with King Oliver, Albert Wynn and others (Album B-1010).

### STATUS OF CU'S CASE AGAINST POST OFFICE

Following the recent decision of the U. S. Court of Appeals which found that the Post Office could not legally ban the mailing of CU's "Report on Contraceptive Materials," the Postmaster General asked the Appeals Court to review its decision. The Appeals Court has now refused to do this.

The Postmaster General has not yet made known whether he will take the case to the U. S. Supreme Court. Under the law, he has three months from the date of the Appeals Court decision in which to do this. If the Post Office does not appeal within the three-month period, it must remove the ban on the mailing of the report.

**Capitol:** A comparative newcomer in the recording field. Has issued some good records in popular and "swing," but nothing in true jazz.

**Climax** (Distributed by Blue Note): Some New Orleans recordings by George Lewis and His New Orleans Stompers. Musically good, mechanically fair.

**Columbia:** Has failed to continue the splendid series of re-issues started a couple of years ago, which included Armstrong, Bix and Bessie Smith. Promises re-issues in near future.

**Commodore:** See notes in text. Musically excellent, mechanically good. Outstanding records: "Basin Street Blues," with Kaminsky, Russell and Sid Catlett (C 1513); Ammons Rhythm Kings, "Bottom Blues" (C 1516); Wild Davison and Band, "Panama" (C 1511); Edmond Hall Sextet, "Uptown Cafe Blues" (C 1512); Billie Holiday and Orchestra, "I'll Be Seeing You" (C 553); George Brunis and Band, "Ugly Child" (C 546).

**Decca:** Has also stopped its fine series of re-issues, notable among them, the "Gems of Jazz." Also promises good things to come.

**Jazz Information** (distributed by Commodore): Continues a series of on-the-spot recordings by the legendary Bunk Johnson of New Orleans, with George Lewis and Albert Warner. Musically good, mechanically fair. Outstanding record: "Sobbin' Blues" (JI 16).

**Jazz Record:** (236 W. 10th St., NYC). Piano solos by Art Hodes, and band recordings with George Brunis and Rod Cless. Musically good, mechanically good. Outstanding record: "At the Jazz Band Ball" (JR 1003).

**Keynote:** For the first time, tried the strictly jazz idiom, with some recordings by George Hartman and a good, old-fashioned dixieland band. Josh White's album, "Southern Exposure," may also still be available. Musically good, mechanically good.

**Session** (125 N. Wells, Chicago): Some Jelly Roll Morton re-issues, and some originals featuring Art Hodes (piano) and Mezz Mezzrow (clarinet). Musically excellent, mechanically good.

**S-D Records** (104 E. Bellevue, Chicago): Piano solos by Tut Soper. Musically excellent, mechanically good.

**Signature** (601 W. 26th St., NYC): Mainly re-issues, but good ones. Includes old and formerly unavailable recordings by King Oliver, Ma Rainey, Jess Stacy and others. Musically good, mechanically good. Outstanding records: King Oliver, "Riverside Blues" (S 905); Jess Stacy, "Breeze" (S 901).

**Victor:** No new production, and has discontinued its fine re-issue albums. The one outstanding issue has been an album of piano music, featuring Fats Waller, Jelly Roll Morton, Earl Hines and Duke Ellington. Musically excellent, mechanically good.

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